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NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

NICK CARTER AND THE NIHILISTS

"I HAD TO COME THIS WAY TO MAKE THAT WOMAN CONFESS HER CRIMES," SAID NICK, TEARING THE DISGUISE AWAY FROM HIS FACE.

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NEW
NICK CARTER WEEKLY
REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

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NICK CARTER AND THE NIHILISTS;

Or, THE MINE UNDER THE GRAND DUKE'S PALACE

THE YUKON
204 203 PACIFIC AVE.
WINNIPEG, CANADA.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

AHEAD OF TIME.

There was to be a ball in the evening at the palace of the Grand Duke Ivan, at Moscow, and preparations for the event began early in the day, and the army of servants employed in the palace had much extra work to do.

Among them were a number who went to the deep and extensive cellars beneath the palace. It was their special duty to explore the wine vaults and bring up the rarest bottles for the banquet that was to follow the ball.

The wine vaults were deep below the surface of the ground, but directly under the large ballroom. A steward, holding a candle, directed the work of the servants.

"Lift that case just in front of you, Peter," said the steward. "Set it over on the case at your left. Underneath you will find a case of eighteen hundred and nine, the choicest wine the grand duke owns. He will want some of it served to-night."

"Aye," said Peter, "here it is. But, by the great bell of Moscow! it's heavy."

"Is it more than you can lift alone?"

"A great deal more. See!"

Peter stooped over the case and tugged at one end. The steward called to some of the others.

"Here, Anton, and the rest of you. Come and help."

Anton and two others came up and got in among the cases. Before they could stoop to take hold of the 1809 case, that case and the four men disappeared.

There was a noise of breaking and crashing. A rush of air put out the steward's candle.

"Saints defend us!" he cried. "What's the matter?"

He dared not step forward or back lest he fall into some unseen hole. With trembling fingers he tried to strike a match. From below somewhere he heard groans of pain. There was also a sound as of somebody stumbling about in the darkness. Stewards and servants in other parts of the cellar called:

"What's the matter?"

Some were approaching the place with candles. None of them had come near enough to light the scene, and the first steward had not succeeded in striking a match, when there was a deafening explosion. Every candle in the cellar was put out instantly. The air was thick with the fumes of powder. The stone pillars of the palace trembled.

Above the uproar could be heard the tinkling of glass as hundreds of bottles were broken. More wine was spilled at that moment than could have been drunk at a dozen banquets.

The first steward was thrown against a big cask. He struck his head upon the rim and fell to the ground, unconscious. More than one other at a distance was overthrown by the concussion. None, however, were stunned, excepting the four who had disappeared.

Those who had been thrown down, now arose, and those who were set staggering, rushed in the greatest alarm for the distant stairs.

A few were speechless with fright, or their throats were so filled with smoke that they could only gasp and choke. One uttered that cry which is the most awful that can be heard in Russia:

"The nihilists! the nihilists!"

Others, doubtless, had been thinking the same. Hearing it, their fear was doubled. Up the stairs they crowded, fighting with each other for the chance of get-

ting up safely. They rushed into a large room, which was next to the great kitchen of the palace.

There they were met by the master of the household, who was white as a sheet and his voice shook, but he spoke sternly:

"Stop! you ignorant cowards!"

All were rushing for the outer doors.

"Stop!" he repeated. "I'll order the knout for every donkey of you who stirs. Stand still, I say, and tell me what has happened!"

The servants were awed by his command and threats, but they trembled still.

"You, Fedor," commanded the major-domo, addressing one of the stewards, "you speak! What has happened below there?"

"Ah!" shuddered Fedor, "I don't know. Did you not hear?"

"Yes, I heard. Who could not? And I saw glasses and dishes of great value fall to pieces on the floor. But what caused it?"

"Alas, sir, I do not know. I know only that my light went out, puff! That I was thrown down; that there was a stifling smoke—and that is all."

"All? It is little enough in the way of an explanation. His highness, the grand duke, will require a report from all of you. The cause of the explosion must be learned."

His look showed that he meant them to return to the vaults and investigate. The servants shrank away from the stair door. He opened his lips to speak, when a footman came in.

"Major-domo," he said, "the grand duke awaits you."

"You see," muttered the major-domo, under his breath, "his highness will require a report."

He hurried away, leaving the frightened servants chattering together in low tones.

"It was surely the nihilists," said one.

"He will make us go back," said another.

"We ought to go," said a third, "not only for love of the grand duke, but because our comrades are down there, dead, or dying."

Several looked startled at this. They had not realized before that all had not come up from below. One of the stewards made a count of those present.

"Five missing!" he whispered, his face turning pale again.

Then those who were missing were named, but no one had sufficient courage to lead the way back to the cellar. The major-domo returned. With him was Dimitri, a captain of the palace guard.

It hardly needs saying that Dimitri was, as a soldier should be, a brave man. He glanced scornfully at the pale servants and strode past them to the stairway door.

"There must be lights," said he shortly.

The major-domo spoke to the servants.

"Follow him, every one of you, with candles."

They obeyed without hesitation, for a command is a command.

Dimitri paused at the bottom of the stairs to take a lighted candle from the major-domo.

"This way?" he asked, pointing.

"Yes, in the wine vaults."

The soldier strode on, going carefully as he came to places where broken casks and cases blocked his way. A smell of powder was still in the air. Wine was flowing freely over the door, and the men's feet splashed in it. Presently the soldier stumbled and drew back.

"Ah!" was all he said, but he held the candle before him and stooped.

He had come to the unconscious body of the first steward.

"Alive," said Dimitri, after placing his hand on the man's heart.

A faint groan was heard. The soldier turned at once, and, holding the candle in front of him, picked his way cautiously over the wreckage of cases and bottles to the place where the 1809 wine had been stored. He saw there a deep, black hole. For a moment he stamped upon the stone floor.

This was to make sure that it was firm enough to hold him and the others. Then he turned to the major-domo.

"We shall have to have a ladder," he said.

The major-domo gave the necessary order, and two men hurried to obey. While they were gone, the soldier bent over the opening and tried to see to the bottom, but the candle rays gave him no clear view of anything. He saw a mass of broken stone, fragments of cases, and other woodwork, but nothing else.

"Anybody down there?" he called.

"Help! for God's sake, help!" replied a faint voice.

"Keep up your courage, man," said Dimitri. "We shall help you as soon as we can get to you."

The ladder was brought, and the soldier carefully let it down into the hole. It was a long ladder, and when he finally got it firmly placed, only a foot or two of the end stuck up above the level of the floor.

Dimitri descended at once, taking a candle with him. At the bottom he found more wreckage than had appeared from above. It covered all but the feet of two men. Another lay with head and shoulders free.

He was dead. The fourth, who was the one called Anton, was standing, but he was unable to move. A big slab of stone leaned against him, pressing him against the wall of the hole.

"Ah!" he gasped, "this is crushing the life out of me."

The soldier set his candle into a pile of loosened dirt, took hold of the slab with both hands, and he tugged hard. At first it seemed as if it would prove to be too much for him; but the soldier was a muscular man, and presently the stone came toward him. He leaped aside to let it fall.

Then he jumped to Anton. For the man hadn't strength enough left to stand alone. Dimitri caught him and carried him up the ladder until he could be lifted by those above.

Then the soldier returned to the bottom of the hole and resumed his investigation. Two things beside the dead bodies attracted his attention. One was a coil of wire and some pieces of iron that evidently had belonged to a machine of some kind. The other was a passage leading from the hole.

This passage was hardly more than three feet wide and about six in height. The walls were of earth, as were the walls of the hole. By holding the candle close, the soldier could see plainly the marks of picks and spades.

"Nihilists," he said to himself, "as I supposed. They made a mine underneath the ballroom. Undoubtedly they meant to explode it to-night. Meantime, they had dug so close to the floor of the vaults that the weight of four men broke through. The men, somehow, accidentally brought on the explosion ahead of time."

CHAPTER II.

THE BRANCH IN THE TUNNEL.

Dimitri looked up to the top of the hole, and saw a number of faces there, each lighted by a candle.

"Is it the work of nihilists?" asked the major-domo, in a whisper.

"Yes," answered the soldier. "Send down some men to take care of these poor fellows."

The major-domo gave his orders.

"There isn't room for more than half a dozen to work here," said Dimitri. "The rest of you had better rig up a tackle to hoist out the bodies."

"Are they dead?"

"All three."

The men at the top shuddered. And as the men descended the ladder, Dimitri entered the narrow passage. He continued his exploration for some time.

"When he returned, the servants had not yet uncovered the bodies of their dead comrades.

He set his candle down and helped them until all three had been lifted to the top. After that he sent the others up and remained below a while, examining the wreckage.

Now and then he called to those at the top to hoist up something that he fastened to the tackle. In this way he slowly cleared away the wreckage from the bottom of the hole. At last he was satisfied with what he had seen, and he went up. The major-domo was still there.

"Well?" he asked eagerly.

"I will make my report to his highness," responded the soldier coldly.

The major domo looked disappointed, but he said nothing. A number of the servants were at work putting the vaults in order.

"A good deal of good wine spoiled," remarked Dimitri, as he went toward the stairs.

"Alas! yes," replied the major-domo, "and three faithful men killed."

"How is the other one?"

"Anton? Well, he will live, I think, but I fear he will never be good for anything. He's probably suffering from internal injuries."

Dimitri now went upstairs and soon presented himself at the door of the grand duke's private apartment. A soldier saluted, announced his name to the grand duke, and opened the door for him. With a low bow, Dimitri crossed the threshold and stood at attention.

It was a large room. The grand duke called it his office, but there was little in it like the furniture of an office except a long table, on which were papers and writing materials. The grand duke sat at this table. Standing beside him was a man a few years younger than he. This was Prince Paul, the grand duke's brother. Both were evidently anxious and eager to hear the captain's report.

"Speak, Captain Dimitri," said the grand duke quickly. "Have you learned the cause of the disturbance?"

"I have, your highness."

"And was it——"

The grand duke hesitated to finish the question.

"Yes, your highness," responded the soldier, understanding. "It was nihilists, undoubtedly."

The brothers exchanged glances of dismay.

"We had hoped that it was an accident," murmured the grand duke.

"Let us hear the details," suggested the prince.

The grand duke nodded to Dimitri, who at once told them about the death of three servants and the injury of a fourth. Then he explained how it had happened.

"I find by examination of the hole," said he, "that the scoundrels had finished their digging. The mine was ready and they had put their machine in place."

"How do you make that out?"

"I found a coil of wire and pieces of the machine."

"The explosion," interposed Prince Paul, "really told the whole story, didn't it?"

"I think not," replied his brother. "For though the explosion was bad enough, it was not so great an affair as they must have intended. You would have supposed that they would use powder enough to destroy the palace."

The grand duke turned inquiringly to Dimitri.

"Your highness is right," said the soldier. "It was undoubtedly their intention to blow the palace to pieces, and I have no doubt that the time set for the crime was to-night, when your highness and many others would be in the ballroom."

"Why then so little effect now?"

"Because they had not stored all their powder in the mine."

"Oh!"

"I am quite sure that is the case, because there was room in the mine for much more powder than was exploded. Besides, the coil of wire shows that the machine had not been connected."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, your highness, the nihilists would not stand in the mine to touch off the charge. They would explode it by electricity from a distance."

"I suppose so."

"When everything was ready, the wire would have been uncoiled and one end taken out to the river."

"The river?"

"Yes. If your highness wishes, I will point out the spot from which the mine would have been fired."

The brothers opened their eyes in astonishment.

"You have learned much, captain," said the grand duke. "By all means, show us what you can."

"If your highness will step to the window, then."

The grand duke led the way, Prince Paul and Dimitri following. A window at one end of the room looked out upon a broad garden that lay behind the palace. The garden ended at the edge of the Oka River. All along the bank was a stone wall, that had its foundation several feet below the river bottom.

"Now then, captain," said the grand duke.

"If your highness," responded the soldier, "will look a little to the left of the end of the walk that goes from the fountain in the center of the garden, you will see a slight rise in the bank."

"Yes, I see that."

"Th river wall there is so high that if a person were seated in a boat behind it at this moment, you could not see him."

"True."

"The mine would have been fired from a boat placed like that."

"That is a startling statement. Can you prove it, captain?"

"I think so. I can tell your highness what leads me to think as I do."

"Go on."

"From that point at the river edge a passage, or tunnel,

goes under the garden and under the palace. It branches when it is about halfway across the garden."

"Branches, captain?"

"Yes. One branch leads to the mine beneath the wine vaults of this palace."

"Where does the other branch go?"

"I followed it until it ended in a mine, that is, a large, high hole."

"Where was it?"

"Your highness, how could I tell?"

"But you found out, evidently, where the river end was."

"Yes, for there I found a stone in the river wall that moved easily when I pressed it."

"Indeed!"

"It turned on a hinge or pivot, I am not sure which, and I found that I was looking out on the river."

"Ah!"

"Close beside the opening was an electrical machine. It was set there so close to the wall that, as I said before, anybody in a boat could have reached in and touched it."

"And this machine was connected with the mine?"

"Pardon me, no. But it would have been connected if the explosion had not taken place ahead of time."

"I see. The wire would have been uncoiled and an end taken out to the river."

"Yes, your highness."

"But even then, there was comparatively little powder in the mine."

"True your highness, but the scoundrels had all of today and this evening with which to bring in more."

Prince Paul and the grand duke shuddered as they understood at last how deep and perfect was the infernal plot.

"They could have worked by daylight," continued the soldier, "though probably they would have waited till night for fear of being seen by somebody on the other side of the river. In an hour they could have stored enough powder and dynamite in that mine to blow this palace to pieces."

"Terrible!" exclaimed the grand duke.

"Indeed it is," said the prince. "And it seems they meant to make doubly sure by having two mines. Is that what you think, captain?"

Dimitri hesitated before replying:

"I cannot tell."

The grand duke looked up quickly.

"You can tell your own thoughts, captain," he said.

"Exactly," answered the prince. "Under what part of the building do you think the second mine is?"

"Your highness, I do not think it is under this building at all."

They looked their surprise.

"Where, then?" demanded the prince.

"Your highness," responded the soldier, "I think the second mine is beneath your own house."

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDERFUL AMERICAN.

"Beneath my house!" gasped Prince Paul.

"I believe so. I do not know how we can tell for certain, but when I had been down to the river edge I paced the distance back to the place where the tunnel branched."

"How many paces?"

"Ninety-seven."

"That," said the grand duke, "would make the place about ten yards this side of the fountain."

Dimitri bowed.

"And then did you pace the branch tunnels?" asked Paul.

"I did," replied the soldier. "I found that it was ninety paces to the mine under the wine vaults. It was ninety-three paces to the other mine."

"That would bring it far beyond the end of the palace," remarked the grand duke.

"It all depends upon the direction," said the prince.

"The branch," said Dimitri, "goes in the direction of your house."

"Then it must be directly under my house!"

"I think so."

"Was there explosive stuff there?"

"None."

The prince looked relieved, but the grand duke was puzzled.

"I can't understand it," he said. "But perhaps the captain has thought that out, too."

"I can only suggest, your highness," responded the soldier, "that the nihilists had begun to place their powder under this palace, and that they intended to fill the other mine, also, and put another infernal machine there to be connected with the dynamo at the river bank. Then both mines could have been fired at the same time."

"What a fearful discovery!" exclaimed the grand duke.

"But made in time," added the prince.

"Yes, except for the poor fellows who met their death below. Captain, you have done well. I shall not forget it."

The captain bowed low. He knew from the grand duke's words and manner that it was time for him to go. He had told all he knew, and now he left the room.

The brothers then discussed the matter, trying to make up their minds whether the ball ought to be postponed.

"Of course," said the grand duke, "I shall have the river bank guarded, and I will put men in the tunnel itself, lest there be an opening to it that Dimitri failed to see."

"I suppose you will call in the secret-service officers."

"Yes. The question is whether I should not notify his majesty, the czar."

At this moment a footman knocked and entered. He brought word that Count Roman, a cousin of the grand duke's, had arrived. A moment later, Count Roman came in and shook hands with the brothers, as he said:

"I was afraid I should not get here in time. I have traveled night and day."

"Well, you have several hours to spare."

"None too many."

"Did you come direct from London?"

"Yes—but, tell me, Ivan, is something the matter? You both seem so sober."

They told him what had happened.

He was greatly shocked.

"Is there no way," he exclaimed, "of breaking up that infernal organization?"

"The nihilists?"

"Yes."

"I am afraid not. They spring up from the ground, apparently."

"But this one that is working in Moscow might be destroyed."

"I hope for that," said the grand duke. "I have de-

cided to notify his majesty, and beg him to send some of his own secret-service men here at once."

"That is good! And, meantime, of course, you will not let the affair become known to the public."

"Decidedly not, but I had forgotten to give the orders for that. I have been too disturbed to think of everything. Excuse me a moment while I speak to the major-domo."

The head servant was summoned, and while he was getting his intructions, Count Roman and the prince talked in low tones.

"He tells me," said the grand duke, as he rejoined then, "that Anton, another servant who was injured in the explosion, is dead."

"And that makes four!"

"Four."

"And all innocent men—men against whom the nihilists could have no ill feeling."

"It seems to make no difference, for if the mines had been exploded on time, everybody, servants and all, would have been slaughtered."

The grand duke sighed, and sat at his table to write.

"I shall send a telegram to his majesty," he added.

"Wait," said Count Roman gravely. "Pardon me, Ivan, but I think there may be a better way."

"How?"

"I wouldn't trouble his majesty with the matter."

"But he has the best secret-service men in the world."

"I doubt it. I would beg his majesty's pardon for thinking so, but I doubt it just the same."

"Well, even so, they are the best that I can hope to employ."

"I think not."

"What do you mean?"

"I will tell you. While I was in London some time ago, an American detective was there in pursuit of a wonderfully clever rogue, who had stolen a crown diamond belonging to the queen of Roumelia."

"Well?"

"I was well acquainted with the Roumelian minister in London, and so learned a great deal about the matter. Nicholas Carter, that's the detective's name, had succeeded in a most marvelous way. It is my firm opinion that he is the greatest detective in the world."

"How can that help us?"

"Why not engage Nick Carter?"

"Is he still in London?"

"No. But he is now on the way to London, on a steamer from America, for a vacation. He will probably pass through London in a day or two on his way to Switzerland," continued the count. "But we can intercept him. Suppose we send word to him through the Roumelian minister, who will know where to find him, and see if he will undertake this case."

"I rather like the idea, but——"

"But what, Ivan?"

"Does he know anything about Russia? Does he speak the language?"

"My dear cousin, Nick Carter knows every country, and speaks all languages like a native."

"Then let us send for him."

"By the way, there is more than one of him."

"What do you mean by that?"

"He has two or three assistants, I really don't know how many, and they usually work together on big cases. We'd better have them all, hadn't we?"

"Are his assistants now with him on the steamer?"

"Yes. Shall I write to the Roumelian minister?"

"Yes—or telegraph. Let's make sure of getting at this wonderful American."

Count Roman sat down to write the necessary telegram.

Prince Paul said:

"The horror of this thing grows upon me. Think of it, Ivan! If that mine under my house had been exploded, Irma might have been killed."

Irma was the prince's only daughter.

"Irma would have been at the ball," remarked the grand duke.

"Even then she might have been killed by the explosion under the palace. She was doomed, in any case, you see."

The grand duke nodded gravely.

"I hope," he said, "that Nick Carter will trace the scoundrels to their hiding place and bring them all to justice."

Count Roman's telegram was soon written and sent. The Roumelian minister in London received it that afternoon, and went with it at once to Nick Carter's hotel, the Tavistock. For Nick had just arrived. Chick and Patsy were with the great detective.

Nick liked the look of the case."

"I'll take it," he said to the minister. "They seem willing to let me work in my own way. If they were not, I shouldn't bother with it."

"Shall I telegraph them that you will call on them?" asked the minister.

"No."

The detective wrote a line on a sheet of paper and handed it to the minister.

"Wire that to your friend," he said.

The message read as follows:

"Carter will take the case, but you must not expect to see him. Telegraph a detailed account of what happened."

"When you have received an answer," said Nick, "bring it to me. I shall be ready to start then."

The answer was a long telegram from the grand duke to the minister. It described the location of the palace and the prince's house near it, and told all about Captain Dimitri's investigation and theories.

"I think we shall need Ida in this before we get through," said Nick.

Accordingly, he cabled her instructions to start from New York at once for Moscow.

Then he sent Patsy on ahead to Moscow, by one route, and Chick by another.

Nick himself did not leave London until they were far on their way.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRISONER IN COURT.

Nearly two weeks had passed since the discovery of a mine beneath the grand duke's palace, and not a hint of the affair had appeared in the newspapers of Moscow. Among the nobility of the city it was whispered that an attempt had been made to blow up the palace, but nobody knew the details. It was understood by people of that class that the subject was not to be mentioned.

Those who had heard something about it, believed that

the secret-service men were at work, and they wondered why there were no arrests. Generally people knew nothing whatever about the affair, and even the police were in ignorance of it.

There is no country where secrets of this kind are kept as thoroughly as they are in Russia. It must be remembered, however, that in that country there is always fear of nihilists. Many an innocent man gets into trouble because he is suspected of belonging to that murderous organization. Men are sometimes thrown into prison merely because they are suspected, and kept there a long time, although the police are unable to bring any good evidence against them.

One day, sometime after the explosion in the wine vault of the grand duke's palace, there was a prisoner in the central police court of Moscow in whom two or three officers present seemed to take a good deal of interest.

He was not like the other prisoners in appearance. Most of them were poor persons, though there were a few who were well dressed. They were charged with the ordinary offences that are tried in such a court—drunkenness, small thieving, disorderly conduct, and so forth.

The man who attracted particular attention was evidently a countryman. He wore the rough, ill-fitting clothes of a peasant. His trousers were tucked into high boots, he had a ragged fur cap, and his blouse was belted with a strap that had been taken from a worn-out harness. His thick hair grew down almost to his eyes, and that and his beard looked as if brush and comb were unknown. He was an ugly-looking chap, and would have nothing to say to the other prisoners.

The police did not bring him to the bar until all the other cases had been disposed of. By that time, it was afternoon, and the magistrate was in a hurry to go. He frowned when he saw the rough-looking prisoner.

"What is your name?" he asked sharply.

"Beppo," replied the prisoner, in a deep, sullen tone.

One of the officers bent forward to whisper to the magistrate, who listened, with growing interest. Presently he nodded, and glanced at the clock.

"I will examine him privately," he said.

At that time there were few spectators in the courtroom. Friends of the other prisoners had all gone away, leaving only those who hung around for the sake of killing time. Two of these exchanged glances when the magistrate made his announcement. Then they got up and left the room. The officers led the peasant to the magistrate's private room.

"Well," said the magistrate, sitting at his table, "let's get through this quickly. You say your name is Beppo."

"Yes, your excellency."

"Where do you live?"

"On an estate about ten versts this side of Tver."

"Tver? Indeed! That is far away. How did you come to Moscow?"

"I walked, your excellency."

"What for?"

"To see the city. I had never seen it."

"Why didn't you go to Tver?"

The peasant shrugged his shoulders.

"I know Tver," he said.

"What did you do on the estate?"

"I am a woodchopper."

"I suppose you took all the money you had saved for a year, to come here, eh?"

"Yes; it wasn't much. A few roubles. It's all gone now."

"Do you know what you were arrested for?"

"I suppose I was drunk."

"More than that, Beppo. The police have evidence that you are a nihilist."

Beppo scowled, but said nothing.

"Come!" said the magistrate sternly; "speak! It is useless for you to deny anything. Better confess and save yourself trouble. You don't want to be sent to Siberia, do you?"

"No, your excellency."

"Then why don't you speak?"

"What shall I say? If the police have evidence, why don't they tell it? I am not a nihilist. I have heard of them, but I never saw one to know him."

One of the officers put in:

"He was with suspects last night, your excellency."

"Oh, was he?" returned the magistrate. "Where are the suspects?"

"We didn't arrest them."

"Why not?"

"Well," replied the officer, hesitating, "they were doing nothing but listening to this fellow——"

"Pooh!" interrupted the magistrate. "If they were suspects, you should have brought them before me. I would soon find out."

He spoke sharply, and the officer reddened.

"What was this man doing?" demanded the magistrate impatiently.

"He was singing a revolutionary song."

Beppo laughed hoarsely.

The magistrate and officers looked at him in surprise.

"Me sing!" cried the peasant. "I can't make a musical sound!"

"You were singing last night."

"I didn't know it. I must have drank more vodka than ever before."

"What were you singing?" asked the magistrate.

"I don't know, your excellency."

"Where were you?"

"I don't know. I suppose the officers can tell."

"Who was with you?"

"I don't know. I remember nothing about it."

"The officers say you were singing a revolutionary song. That shows that you must have learned it somewhere. And that shows that you have been with the nihilists."

Beppo stopped laughing.

"I beg your excellency's pardon," he said gruffly, "but it seemed so funny to hear that I had been singing. I never did before, I am sure. I know no revolutionary song. What was it like?"

"Repeat some of the words," said the magistrate to the officer.

The officer obeyed.

Beppo listened, with a look of dull curiosity.

"I don't think I ever heard that before," he muttered. "Maybe some of the good fellows I met last night taught it to me for a joke. I'd like to get at them now, if that was the case. I'd make 'em feel my fists! It's no joke to be arrested."

"That explains it!" snapped the magistrate crossly. "You've taken up my time with a drunken peasant. If you had known your business, officer, you would have fol-

lowed the suspects, found out who taught this ignorant fellow to sing the words he has already forgotten, and then you would have brought me something worth considering. I shall let this fellow go, and I hope it will teach you to be sharper in the future."

The officer looked crestfallen enough.

"As for you, Beppo," continued the magistrate, "let this be a lesson to you, too. Go back to your woodchopping. If you stay in the city, be very careful what kind of men you drink with."

So saying, the magistrate left the room.

The officers opened a door. "Get out!" they said angrily to Beppo.

One of them aimed a kick at Beppo as he went through the door, but the peasant dodged, and hurried from the building. When he was on the street he paused and looked around doubtfully, as if he did not know which way to go. At last he started.

When he passed the first street corner, the two men who had exchanged glances in the court fell in behind them. Beppo did not seem to see them. He walked slowly on until he came to a drinking place. Then he stopped and stood in front of it for a moment.

"Money all gone," he muttered. "I suppose there's no place in Moscow where anybody will give me a drink."

Then he cursed under his breath, and began to hum the revolutionary song that had been the cause of his arrest. The two men stepped up and stood on each side of him. Beppo looked at them, with a start, and then smiled. He had stopped his humming.

"Why don't you go on?" asked one of them. "That's not a bad song."

"It got me into trouble last night," replied Beppo. "I wouldn't have sung it then if I hadn't been so full. Lucky for me that the magistrate was in a hurry to go to dinner."

"He let you off, did he?"

"You see. I not on my way to Siberia."

"What did you tell him?"

"That I couldn't remember anything."

"Did he ask who you were with?"

"He did."

"And you didn't remember?"

"Not for him, but I remember you, just the same."

Beppo smiled again as he said this.

"They thought I was a fool," he added. "But I beat them that time, curse the whole tribe of them!"

"Did the officers say that you were a nihilist?"

"Yes, but they didn't trap me."

He winked slyly, and the others smiled.

"Come with us," they said.

He walked with them a long distance, and nothing was said on the way. At last they entered a small house, where one of the men brought out a bottle of vodka from a closet.

"Are you thirsty?" he asked.

"Dry as a fish," replied Beppo. He took the bottle and drank deeply. "Now I feel like myself again," he said, "but I shall take good care not to drink too much another time."

"That is wise. Now, tell us, friend, how you came to be a nihilist. You trust us, don't you?"

"Of course! Didn't you tell me last night——"

"We were trying you then."

"Well, you found out about me, didn't you?"

"Partly. We were interested enough to go to court and see what happened to you. How did you become a nihilist?"

"I was brought up to it," replied Beppo. "All my people were against the government. One after another they were taken away, all except my sister, and last month they sent her to Siberia."

The peasant's voice deepened as he spoke, and he finished with a savage curse.

"You have cause enough to hate the government," said one of the men, at the conclusion. "Would you do anything to give it a blow?"

Beppo leaped to his feet.

"Show me the chance!" he cried.

"In good time. Have another drink."

"No, not one. I am no longer thirsty for anything but the blood of my enemies. If you are true nihilists, show me how I can strike a blow at the government!"

"Would you risk your life?"

"What is my life to me?"

"Would you do something, fire a mine, for instance, if you were certain that your life would be lost in the explosion?"

"I would if I was sure that some of my enemies would be destroyed, also."

"I think you are the man for us. You said last night that your name was Beppo."

"That is right."

"Mine is Boris, and my friend, here, is Goritz. We belong to a circle of nihilists here which is a branch of the great organization——"

"Are you doing anything?" demanded Beppo eagerly. "I have walked many long versts to meet such men as you, but I want to see something done."

"You shall. That is, if Vlasda accepts you."

"Vlasda? That must be a woman. Who is she?"

"She is the leader of our circle."

"Ah!"

"Why do you look so strange? Have you any objections to taking orders from a woman?"

"None. I was thinking of my sister."

"Was she a leader, too?"

"She was. I would have died for her! I will die for this Vlasda, if she tells me to."

"That's the right spirit, Beppo. You shall meet her this afternoon."

CHAPTER V.

IN THE HANDS OF THE NIHILISTS.

Thus it was that Nick Carter wormed his way into the secrets of the Moscow nihilists; for the peasant, Beppo, was none other than the American detective.

It had been a long and difficult task. Nick had been willing that it should be slow, for he knew that nothing could be gained by hurry. The nihilists were very suspicious. They knew what the people generally did not know—that a mine had been dug under the grand duke's palace, and that it had been discovered before they were ready to explode it. Therefore, they supposed that the secret-service men of the government were hunting for them.

Nick presumed that they would not only be careful in talking to strangers, but that they would stop holding their secret meetings until they thought the affair had

blown over. So he dressed as a peasant, and actually walked a long distance to Moscow so that he might be able to account for his movements if any troublesome questions were asked.

After arriving in Moscow, he had gone to drinking places and everywhere that he thought he might find nihilists. He had done all the talking himself, and, at last, when he felt certain that there were nihilists in his hearing, he took the risk of singing a song that was sure to lead to his arrest.

Everything followed, then, exactly as he expected. He saw two of the men he had believed to be nihilists in the courtroom waiting to see what would be done with him. They had spoken to him, as he supposed they would, and he now believed that if he let them alone they would soon give him a clew to the villains who planned the destruction of the grand duke's palace.

"I hope this Vlasda has a plan ready," said Nick.

"We shall see," replied Boris. "There isn't a doubt that she has a plan in her head, but she may not be ready to work it."

"Why not?"

"We cannot tell. She knows, and sometimes she keeps her reasons to herself."

"She makes good plans, does she?"

"Indeed she does! It was no fault of hers that her last plan didn't work as we expected. It was a great one!"

"What was it?"

"Don't you know?"

"How should I?"

"That's so. I forgot that you were new to Moscow. Well, she had a plan for destroying the grand duke's palace and that of the Prince Paul, his brother, at the same time."

"Ho! That was a big idea."

"You don't yet understand how big. Hundreds of the nobility would have been killed."

"So!"

"Yes, indeed, for she intended to have the mines fired while all the rich people of the city were dancing at the palace."

"That would have been a fine stroke."

"You may well say so. We worked like beavers for months to get the mine ready."

"It must have taken a long time."

"You're right. We tunneled in from the river, taking the dirt out and dumping it into the stream. That was handy, eh?"

"Good! The current washed it away, I suppose?"

"Yes. We were going to explode the mine from a boat."

"By electricity?"

"Sure!"

"And no one discovered the tunnel?"

"Not until the last minute. We were often digging away underground while the grand duke was walking right over our heads."

"You could have blown him up easily enough then."

"Certainly, but we wanted to wait until we had a lot of them together."

"Well, what was the matter?"

"Some stupid servants of the grand duke's fell through the top of the mine."

"How did that happen?"

"They were at work in the cellar. We had dug away the earth too close to the cellar floor, and when four of them stepped on it together, it caved in."

"Too bad!"

"Yes. If they could only have waited twelve hours longer, then what a surprise! We had already begun to put our powder in the mine."

"Did any of it go off?"

"Yes. There was an electrical machine there, and the servants stumbled against it, and somehow set it off."

"Well?"

"Why, bang! went the powder, and that was the last of the servants."

"Hasn't anything happened since?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the police——"

Boris interrupted, with a shake of the head.

"I think the police haven't heard of it," he said.

"Then the secret-service men must be at work."

"Maybe. But we haven't been troubled by them. Vlasda thinks we are perfectly safe, and it usually proves that Vlasda is right."

"She must be a smart woman."

"You've struck it there. Of course, she's been cautious since that affair. But I think she's about ready to go to work again."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"She sent for Goritz and myself to meet her this afternoon. We will take you along, and after we've told her about you, I think she'll want to see you."

Nick was eager to see the woman.

"It's working out easier than I had thought it would," he said to himself. "I hardly expected to get at the leader of the gang so soon."

About the middle of the afternoon Boris told him that it was time to go. They went to the business part of the city.

"Vlasda," Boris explained on the way, "always comes to our meetings in a carriage. She's no peasant, I can tell you."

"Who is she, then?"

"Ah, few know! Those who do know say nothing."

"But I should think she would give herself away if she comes in a carriage."

"Oh, no, she's too shrewd for that."

"How does she manage it?"

"Why, she drives along the main street to a building where there are dentists, milliners, and dressmakers. She gets out there and goes into the building. Her driver doesn't know where she goes."

"Does that mean that our meeting place is in that building?"

"Not at all. It's on the street this side of it."

"Oh!"

"Vlasda is supposed to go to a dentist, or a dressmaker. In reality, she goes through the building and enters the one where we meet, by a back door."

"Good scheme."

"Sure! She goes back the same way, and nobody is the wiser."

"Does she stay long at the meetings?"

"Not usually. Just long enough to hear reports and give her orders. But this isn't our only meeting place, you know."

"Oh, isn't it?"

"No. There are other places. But this is the one where we always meet Vlasda."

Presently Boris went into what seemed to be a lodging house, and led the way to some back rooms on the ground floor. Nobody was in the first room they entered. It was not a large room, and it contained only a few rough benches without backs, a plain table, and a wooden chair behind it; and back of the table was a blackboard.

"Our schoolroom," whispered Boris, with a wink.

Nick understood. If any policeman, or a stranger, should happen to look in there, he would see what he would supose to be a cheap school. In reality, it was the mask for the real meeting room of the nihilists, which was evidently in a room beyond.

All three sat on a bench, and nothing was said until the faint sound of a bell was heard. It struck three times, and then, after a short pause, twice.

"That means us," whispered Boris. "Thirty-two. "That's our number."

They stood up.

"Shall I go, too?" asked Nick.

"No, wait here."

"What if anybody should come in?"

"Say nothing."

"All right."

"If Vlasda wants to see you, we will let you know soon enough."

They went out, then, and Nick waited for about ten minutes. Nobody came in, and he heard no sound of voices. He did not try to make an examination of the place, for he thought it likely that his actions might be spied on from some secret peephole. The detective was satisfied with his progress thus far. He had believed from the beginning that the one way to work successfully against the nihilists was to become one of them; and it certainly looked as if he was succeeding. Boris and his companion now rejoined Nick and sat down quietly.

"She will see you," Boris whispered.

"When?"

"Now."

"In there?"

"Yes."

"Am I to go in alone?"

"Certainly. You're not afraid, are you?"

Nick grinned.

"I simply don't want to do anything wrong," he said.

"Talk to her just as you have to me," responded Boris. "If she wants you to help, she will say so."

The detective went to the door through which Boris and Goritz had passed. He turned the handle, but the door would not open.

"What's the trick?" he asked impatiently.

"Oh!" said Boris, going to him; "I keep forgetting that you are not one of us."

Boris worked the handle, and, by pressing an unseen spring, caused the door to open.

"Go ahead," he whispered then. "The rest of it is easy."

Nick wondered a little why Boris forgot so easily that the peasant was not a regular member of the organization.

"They are still watching me," he thought.

As he pushed the door open, he turned back and asked:

"Will you two be here when I come out?"

"That depends on Vlasda," replied Boris.

He saw Boris sitting down beside Goritz as he closed the door, and that was the last he ever saw of them.

The detective found himself in a passage about thirty feet in length and four in width, lighted by two or three windows on one side. Several doors opened from the other. The windows were very dusty. He could see through them clearly enough to make out that the space outside was a large court between high buildings.

"The rest of it is easy, is it?" said Nick to himself, with a quick glance at the several doors. "Walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly. I'm the fly, but where is the spider, and which is her parlor?"

Believing that everything he did was being watched, he pretended a great deal more hesitation than he felt. He tried the handle of the first door he came to, and found, as he expected, that it was locked.

It was the same with all the others, until he stood before the door at the end of the passage. Here he paused a moment and looked back. There was no sign that Boris or anybody else was watching, and he tried the door. Like the others, it refused to open.

"Well!" thought Nick, a little puzzled. "What the mischief does this mean? I expected the nihilists to be mysterious, but what they——"

He did not finish the thought, for his attention was taken by a sound of movement beyond the door. It was a very soft sound, a kind of rustling, and if Nick Carter's ears had not been sharper than most men's he wouldn't have heard it at all.

"A woman," he thought; "she was at the door when I tried it. Now she's going away from it. I'll try it again."

He turned the handle, and this time the door opened without difficulty. The detective stepped into a pretty, well-furnished parlor. At a small table in the middle of the room sat a young woman, writing. Nick formed an opinion about her at a glance.

If she was a nihilist, she was in a very different class from that of Boris and Goritz. She was not only a beautiful woman, but she was richly dressed, and her manner, even as she sat at the table, seemed to show that she was accustomed to giving orders.

"I have heard," thought Nick instantly, "that some of the nobles of Russia are nihilists. I wonder if Vlasda belongs to that class."

It might be so, as she was a woman who came to the meetings in a carriage with a coachman; and the meetings were held by daylight, doubtless to accommodate her, for it would be difficult for a wealthy woman to go about at night without attracting the suspicion of her friends. All these thoughts came and went in a flash.

Even as Nick opened the door, the woman spoke. It was clear to Nick's experienced eye that she had just sat down, and that she was pretending that she had been sitting a long time."

"So you've come at last," she said. "I am very busy. Sit down a moment."

Nick did not stir. He stood with his fur cap in his hand, looking doubtfully at her.

"Sit down, I say," she repeated sharply.

Still the detective was motionless. Why? Because

she spoke to him in French. That language is used by all the upper classes in Russia more freely than their own. But Beppo, the rough peasant, wasn't supposed to know a word of French.

"Still trying me," he thought.

Aloud he said, in Russian:

"Are you Vlasda?"

The woman looked up, with a start. She eyed the peasant sharply.

"Why do you ask that?" she demanded.

This time she spoke in Russian.

"Because I'm looking for her," replied Nick.

"Who is she?"

It was Nick's part to appear rather thickheaded, but it was also necessary to show some cunning, for it would be supposed that a nihilist would be shrewd in a certain way. So he looked her straight in the eyes and answered:

"I don't know."

"What is she?" the woman demanded.

"I don't know. I never saw her. I suppose I've got into the wrong room."

He turned toward the door.

"Wait," said she sharply. "I am Vlasda. What do you want of me?"

"I want to know your orders."

"Are you willing to obey them?"

"I am."

"I am told that you have said you would die for me."

"Yes, for they tell me that you are a foe to my enemies."

"And yet you disobeyed the first thing I told you to do."

At this, Nick stared stupidly.

"I told you to sit down," added Vlasda.

"I didn't hear you."

"And yet you are not deaf."

"No."

"You must have heard me speak when you came in."

"I don't understand you."

"Oh, did I speak in French?"

"I don't know. How should I?"

"All Russians speak French."

"All the rich Russians, with titles, Vlasda; not the poor."

She bit the end of her pen, and again eyed him sharply.

"Well," she said, "they tell me that your name is Beppo."

"Yes, Vlasda."

"Can you read?"

"A little."

"I want you first to take a message for me."

"What is it?"

"I will write it."

"And I will obey."

"They tell me that you are anxious to do something."

"I am."

"What do you want to do?"

"Anything you order, if only it brings death to our enemies."

"It will."

"Then give me the message."

"Sit down till I finish it."

Nick dropped awkwardly into a chair. He saw that the woman was watching, keenly, every move he made.

"She suspects me," was Nick's conclusion.

Vlasda wrote for several minutes. After she had blotted her paper, she pressed a button on her desk three times, then paused, and pressed twice more.

The detective could not hear a bell ring, but he had counted the movements of her fingers.

"Thirty-two," he said to himself. "That's a call to Boris and Goritz."

Perhaps it was, but, if so, they did not come in answer to it. The woman did not seem to expect them, for she read what she had written silently.

"All ready, Beppo," she said.

Nick arose, and went to her desk.

"You'd better read it," she said, handing the paper to him, "so that you can remember what the message is if you should happen to lose it."

The detective took the paper, and scowled stupidly as he looked at it.

"What's the matter?" she demanded sharply.

"I suppose it's French," he grumbled. "I told you once I know nothing of French."

"It is not French."

"Well, I can't make anything out of it."

She got up impatiently, and looked over his shoulder.

"You blockhead!" she exclaimed. "You've got the paper wrong side up!"

"Oh, is that it?" and Nick turned the paper around.

"Now, then," said Vlasda, going back to her desk, "read what I have written to Captain Schlepka, and tell me what it is. I want to see if you are smart enough to give the message, if you should lose the paper."

The scowl on the detective's face was deeper than ever. He stared at the paper, and raised his eyes angrily to hers.

"Well?" she said.

"You say this isn't French," he retorted impatiently. "If it isn't, I'd like to know what it is."

"Can't you read it?"

"Read it! No! I'm willing to obey your orders, Vlasda, but I don't like being made a fool of."

"A fool?" she repeated softly, and there was a strange glitter in her eyes. "Perhaps you make a fool of yourself, Beppo."

Their eyes met. For once in his life Nick Carter was in doubt. He hardly knew whether to give her a glance of defiance or to continue to play his part of an ignorant peasant.

What gave the detective his moment of doubt was the fact that the message was written in plain English. He had read half of it while he was holding the paper upside down. After he turned the paper the other way up, it took but a glance to learn what she had written. This was it:

"To Captain Antonin Schlepka.

"DEAR CAPTAIN: I have every reason to believe that the bearer of this note, who says his name is Beppo, is really the American detective, Nick Carter, of whom I told you some days ago. I have tried and tested him in several ways, and he stands the tests well, but I am still suspicious. Boris believes in him; but you know me. I can do nothing with a person whom I cannot trust perfectly. If this man is Nick Carter, he must be made to leave Moscow instantly. If he is really Beppo—well, Beppo says he is willing to die for me. Let's take him at his words, and make him do it. That will be only one ignorant peasant the less in the world. It will be small loss to our cause, and it will be better to lose Beppo than keep in fear that he is the shrewd American. I leave him to you, captain, and expect you to manage things so that I shall never see him again. "VLASDA."

CHAPTER VI.

FACING THE EXECUTIONER.

Nick decided to play his part to the end.

"This is a desperate game," he said to himself, "and she has shown me her hand. I'll keep her guessing."

Taking his cue from her last remark, he muttered:

"I made a fool of myself last night, and got arrested for it. That was because I was drunk. I'm sober now. I don't know what you mean."

"Then," said she coolly, "you can't take my message to Captain Schlepka."

"I can carry this paper to him, if that's what you want," responded Nick.

"But if you should lose it, you couldn't tell him what I have written."

"Read it to me, if that's what you want."

"No," said Vlasda, hesitating, "I think I can trust you not to lose the paper."

"Of course you can."

"Then you may go."

Vlasda began to put away her writing materials as if her business for the day was done. Nick turned the paper over and over, looking at it stupidly.

"Captain Schlepka, I think you said?" he remarked.

"Yes, Beppo."

"Where shall I find him?"

"Didn't I write the address?"

"I don't know. How can I make anything out of this stuff?"

"You are a very ignorant man, Beppo."

"Yes, Vlasda."

"Give me the paper."

Nick handed it to her. She put it in an envelope, and wrote an address.

"There," said she, "see if you can read that."

Nick took the envelope. On it was written, in Russian:

"To Captain Antonin Schlepka, No. 13, Street Pevsy."

The detective slowly read these words aloud.

"Do you know where the Street Pevsky is?" she asked.

"No, Vlasda."

"But you can find out."

"I have a tongue in my head."

"Good! You start west from here. It is a long walk."

"I don't mind that."

"Go, then."

"Will you seal the envelope?"

Vlasda hesitated at this question. Again her eyes burned fiercely as she glanced at the waiting detective.

"No," she replied finally. "Take it as it is."

Nick thought:

"She hopes I'll show the note to somebody who can translate it for me."

As the woman was a puzzle to him, he made an excuse to stay a moment longer by asking:

"Am I to have a number?"

"What for?" she returned.

"Why! Boris and Goritz are called by the number thirty-two. I thought you would give me a number, also."

"Ah, yes. I am very forgetful to-day. Very well, Beppo, you shall be number thirteen."

"It's an unlucky number," he grumbled.

"Pooh! No real nihilist believes that."

"Very well, Vlasda, Number Thirteen goes to thirteen, Street Pevsky."

So saying, he tucked the fatal letter into his jacket, and went out. She watched him, with her eyes half closed, and he heard her moving across the room as soon as he had closed the door.

"Now," said Nick to himself, as he went back along the passage to the "schoolroom," "this is a most unexpected situation. I am in a country where they keep secrets better than anywhere else in the world. I have been nearly two weeks preparing to enter Moscow in a way to avoid attracting suspicion. I thought I had succeeded perfectly, and here I run up against a woman who evidently knows all about me and what I am here for. I didn't give the nihilists credit for being as smart as that."

As he came to the door opening into the "schoolroom," he heard a click. The sound came from in front of him.

"She has unlocked the door for me," he thought. "Certainly she has managed to guard herself well. If the police should make a raid here, she could tell what was happening from that distant room of hers, and by the time any officer got there, she would be gone. It all seems wonderful. I've been spotted, name and all. I can't understand it, not yet. But, of course, the explanation must be simple, if only I can find out what it is."

He opened the door and found the "schoolroom" empty. Boris and Goritz had gone.

Nick presumed that they had been ordered to leave when they heard the signal that he had seen Vlasda making.

"I wonder," he thought, "if this Captain Schlepka business is a fake? If she really believes that I am Nick Carter, she may think to scare me away from the city. I suppose she doesn't dream that I will deliver this letter, for it is practically a sentence of death. Suppose there is no such person as Captain Schlepka, or no such place as thirteen Street Pevsky.

"In that case, an ignorant peasant would wander around for hours trying to find it. At last he would decide that he had been fooled and he would go back to his wood-chopping none the wiser, for the nihilists of the city would be ordered to keep out of his way.

"And it might be the same with the detective. I might hunt in vain for this place. Meantime, Vlasda is already out of my sight, Boris and Goritz have disappeared, and I might have no end of difficulty in getting on their track again.

"Against that theory is the fact that there is a street called Pevsky, and undoubtedly there is a building on it numbered thirteen. And whatever theory is correct, there is one thing that I must count on to a dead certainty: every step I take is watched. Spies are probably looking at me from somewhere at this minute."

These thoughts passed through the detective's mind while he was slowly crossing the "schoolroom." If he could only find out how the nihilists came to know about him! That would solve everything, and make it easy to act.

When he went out to the street, he looked around inquiringly. This was partly to see if he could see Boris or Goritz, but more to play his part for the benefit of any spies who might be observing him.

Then he went around to the main business street and started westward. That was the direction Vlasda had told him to take, and, as a matter of fact, Nick knew that that was the way to the street called Pevsky.

He hoped that he might see Vlasda entering her carriage to go away, but there was no carriage of any kind in front of the building through which she must have gone to get to her secret meeting room.

Plenty of carriages and wagons were passing along the roadway, and the sidewalks were well filled with men and women. It was nearly sundown.

All of a sudden Nick felt as if he had seen a great flash of light. In reality, he saw nothing but the people on the streets, and none of them, so far as he knew, were nihilists. But in his mind he saw an answer to all the puzzling questions about Vlasda. He seemed to see who she was, and how she had found out about him.

"I wonder," he thought, "if that can be the truth? Yes, it must be! There is no other possible theory that will fit so well. I'll deliver this letter and take my chances on the result."

Among the persons near him was a man who stood at the curb looking over a newspaper that he had just bought. Nick approached him.

"Excuse me," he said, "I want to find number thirteen in the Street Pevsky."

The man looked up from his paper, and then began to fold it so that he could read another page.

"I should say," he responded gruffly, "that it would be a few doors from the beginning of the street."

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said Nick, and he drew the letter part way from his jacket. "Yes," he added, after glancing at the address, "that's it. Street Pevsky, number thirteen."

"Well?" said the man, as Nick paused.

"I am a stranger here," the detective began.

"Oh," interrupted the man, "you don't know the way to the Street Pevsky. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it's one, two, three," and the man counted up to ten, "it's the eleventh street down that way," pointing westward. "I mean that you have to turn to your left at the eleventh street. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you go five streets down, and turn to your right."

"Turn at the fifth street?"

"Yes—no, let me see: you turn at the sixth street, my friend, to your right. Then the Street Pevsky is the second on the left."

"Thank you, sir."

"Can you remember all that?"

"I can. Number thirteen. Thank you, sir."

Nick started on, and the man who had told him the way folded his paper, pocketed it, and walked rapidly away in the other direction.

The detective turned, as he had been told to, at the eleventh street, and again at the sixth. A short walk brought him then to the Street Pevsky. Most of the buildings in the neighborhood seemed to be factories or storage warehouses. Some of them were beginning to light up for night work. Two or three workmen going

from one building to another were the only persons in sight when he turned into the street. The building number thirteen was not lighted.

It seemed to be a storage house. Nick rapped at the door. It was opened almost immediately, and a rough-looking man, a giant in size, stood before him. He was dressed like a laborer.

"Is Captain Antonin Schlepka here?" asked Nick.

"What do you want of him?" the other demanded gruffly.

"I have a letter for him."

"Give it to me."

The detective took the letter part way from his pocket and then thrust it back again.

"No," he said, "I will give it only to the captain."

"Was that your order?"

"Not exactly, but I'll understand it that way."

"Who sent the letter?"

"How do I know that you have any business to ask that?"

"You'll have to answer the question. We don't let anybody in here unless we are sure he has a right to come."

"Well, then, Vlasda sent it."

"Oh! Come in."

The man pulled the door far open, and Nick stepped in.

It was dark when the door was closed, and the detective was quickly on his guard. But the man immediately opened another door to a room in which there were windows.

"Go in there," he said.

Nick obeyed. The room was an office of some kind, though it didn't look as if much business was done there. He sat down, and after a moment another man came in. This one was tall, like the first, but he was better dressed.

"Do you want to see me?" he demanded.

"I do, if you are the Captain Antonin Schlepka."

"I am."

"I have a letter for you."

"Hand it over."

Nick took the envelope from his pocket. Schlepka took it and glanced at the address.

"Vlasda's writing," he muttered.

Then he tore off an end of the envelope, for Nick had sealed it while on the way. Schlepka's eyes opened as he looked at the sheet of paper that was inside, and he frowned.

"I suppose you know the message Vlasda sent me," he said.

"She showed it to me," Nick responded.

"Well, what was it?"

"I don't know. I couldn't read it."

"You couldn't, eh?"

"It was not in Russian. I don't see why you ask about it. You've got the paper in your hand."

"Oh!"

There was a sneer in Schlepka's tone.

"Perhaps," suggested Nick, "you can't read."

"Perhaps I can't," replied Schlepka savagely. "Look at it."

He held the paper in front of Nick. It was perfectly blank. There wasn't a word written on either side. Nick scowled stupidly.

"I thought I saw her put the written sheet in the envelope," he said.

"She probably did," retorted Schlepka, "and you took it out."

That was a good guess, for it was exactly what the detective had done.

The trick was worked when he was asking the way to the Street Pevsky.

"I don't see why you say that," said Nick.

"It's getting late," interrupted Schlepka, opening a door behind him. "I know what Vlasda meant. She never sends anybody to me that she can't trust, and she wants me to set you to work."

"Yes, that's it. I'm ready."

"Well, the work's ready. This way."

Schlepka was speaking good-humoredly now, but Nick was not deceived. He knew that a crisis was coming, and he was on the alert to meet it.

There were two men in the room they entered. One was the man who had opened the door. The other was an equally big man, and dressed in the same way, that is, like a common laborer.

It was a large room, and rather dark, for there was only one window, at a height of several feet from the floor.

There was no furniture of any kind in the room, but in a corner were a number of things that might have been tools of some kind, or weapons.

Nick glanced at them, but could not make out what they were.

The two men looked at him curiously as he went in.

"What is your name?" asked Schlepka, as he closed the door.

"Beppo," replied Nick.

"Beppo, eh? Well, Beppo, I've got something to tell you. We won't waste any time about it, for, as I said before, it is getting late."

While Schlepka was speaking, the other men went to a corner and began to pick over the odd-looking things that lay there. One took up a kind of spear that was made by strapping a bayonet to the end of a stout stick about seven feet long. The other selected an iron rod about the same length. One end was sharpened to a point.

With these in their hands, they came over and stood near Captain Schlepka, who went on talking, without appearing to notice them.

"Beppo," said he, "you are in the headquarters of the Moscow nihilists."

"I'm glad of it," responded Nick.

"Oh, are you? Well, this is where we do our most important work. This is a station on the road by which our enemies leave the city."

Nick made no response. He was cautiously watching the two men with the strange weapons. Schlepka crossed the room and laid his hand on what looked like a door-knob. It proved to be the end of a lever. He pulled it out from the wall and laid it level with the floor.

Immediately a trap rose in the floor about ten feet behind the detective. Nick turned and saw it. Below the trap was pitch-darkness. He could hear the sound of running water. The hole in the floor made by the rising of the trap was six or seven feet across.

"Down there," said Schlepka, returning and standing behind the two men, "is the great sewer of Moscow. It empties into the Oka River many versts from the city."

"And that takes your enemies out of the city, I suppose?" remarked Nick calmly.

"It does, and it will take you out."

"Me? Why me?"

"Because Vlasda has judged you to be an enemy."

"But—I don't understand."

The men were now pointing their sharp weapons at Nick.

Schlepka laughed.

"I think you do understand," he said mockingly, "for I believe you are no Russian peasant, but a detective, about whom Vlasda told me."

"Nonsense!"

"She said she would send you to me at the first opportunity. You come with a blank letter. That can mean but one thing."

"And what is that?"

"Your death, Mr. Nicholas Carter."

CHAPTER VII

INTO THE GREAT SEWER.

The last words were spoken in English. The men with the weapons stood still. Evidently they had not yet received the signal which would cause them to act.

"You see," continued Schlepka, using English again, "you have been found out, for I can tell that you understand me. You see, too, that we don't try to bind you, that we do not shoot or poison you. Our way saves noise and suspicion. Your body will be found in the Oka a few days from now, and nobody will know where it came from. It makes no difference whether you resist or not. These men will stab you if you stand still, and, in any case, they will dump you into the sewer. The building is full of our friends waiting to have an important meeting. So we won't have any delay."

At the end of this long speech, Nick was silent. He was determined to play his part to the last.

"Haven't you anything to say?" demanded Schlepka angrily.

The coolness of the detective irritated him.

"What are you talking about?" demanded Nick. "I don't know what you've been saying."

"Bah!" returned Schlepka; and then, in Russian: "Men, do your work."

Immediately the two giants advanced. Their strange weapons were pointed at the detective's breast. He had been ready from the instant when they took up their weapons, at which time he had guessed what they would try to do. The detective took a quick glance behind him.

No other men had come into the room. He measured the distance between him and the edge of the hole in the floor. Quickly then he retreated to the edge. The giants came at him faster, holding their weapons firmly.

"I hope they've got all the muscle they seem to have," thought Nick.

The points of the weapons were within two feet of his breast. Suddenly he leaned forward, standing on his tip toes, and grasped a weapon in each hand, taking hold of it just beyond the point. He bore his weight a little on the weapons, as if he meant to press them to the floor. The men immediately used all their strength to keep the weapons level. That was what Nick wanted.

Drawing back as far as he could go, and still holding the spear ends, he leaped into the air.

Taken by surprise at this act, the giants raised their weapons. That helped the detective still further. In the first place, he had made them hold the weapons so firmly that he could turn a handspring from them. In the second, once he was started, their upward movement sent him along still farther.

Nick went up in the air, then, feet foremost, going clear over their heads. He let go the weapons when he was at his highest, and whirled around, landing with his face toward them, behind their backs.

Without an instant's hesitation, and before they knew what he was about, he gave them both a violent shove. They stumbled forward, and tried desperately to keep from falling into the hole. While they were staggering on the edge, Nick's fists shot out in American fashion. Each fist caught a man under the back of his skull. Their weapons clattered to the floor, and both men plunged headlong into the sewer.

All this had taken place in little more than a second.

Schlepka seemed to be paralyzed by surprise, but he started savagely toward Nick as the men disappeared.

"You shall not escape, you fiend!" he cried.

A dagger flashed in his hand. Nick was very near the edge of the opening, and there was no time to dodge away from it. The force of Schlepka's rush at him might cause him to lose his balance.

He therefore wheeled about and rushed at the nihilist. They came together about six feet from the opening.

The detective used one of his old tricks. He caught the captain's dagger hand in his left and let drive with his right straight at Schlepka's face.

"That's English, if you understand it, you villain," he said, as he hit Schlepka.

The nihilist stumbled and gasped. Nick saw that he was about to yell for help. If the other nihilists in the building should come rushing in, the game would be up. There was only one way to prevent that. Nick took it.

"You'll have to leave Moscow by your own road," said he.

As he spoke, he caught Schlepka under the knees and shoulders with both hands, lifted him from the floor, and dropped him over the edge of the opening.

The nihilist shrieked as he went down into the blackness. Nick shuddered. But there was no help for it.

"The others will think I did the shrieking," he thought.

He ran to the lever and lifted it. The trap swung down.

Then Nick ran to the window. He leaped up, caught the sill, and pulled himself upon it. Fortunately, he did not have any trouble in opening the window, for, as he did so, he heard hurried steps somewhere in the building. The window opened on the roof of what seemed to be a shed, the roof of which was almost level with the window sill.

Nick crawled out, closed the window behind him, and then lay flat and looked in. He saw a door open and a number of men come hurrying in. It was the same door through which he had come with Schlepka.

The men halted, after entering, and looked around wildly. A few uttered exclamations. One ran to the lever and pulled it. Up rose the trap. All then gathered at the edge and looked down. He saw them shaking their heads.

"They must have gone down together!" was one of the remarks that reached his ears.

Nick wriggled to the edge of the building and looked over. He saw that it was a drop of no more than a dozen feet to the ground. He took it at once.

The place where he landed was inclosed by buildings, some of them factories, apparently, but nobody happened to be near at the moment. It was growing dusk, and now that he was on the ground, the detective had no doubt he could pass for a laborer if anybody should speak to him. He ran around the inclosure until he found an alley that led to the Street Pevsky.

When he came to the street he found that he would have to pass the door to number thirteen to get back to the city. As he did not wish to attract the attention of any of the nihilists inside, he picked up a large basket that a workman had set down a moment before, put it on his shoulder, and went slowly up the street. A man was sitting at the corner.

Nick saw who it was when he came within two or three rods. It was the man who had told him how to get to the Street Pevsky. The detective went up to him and dropped the basket.

"Well?" said the man, with a queer smile.

"It was a close call, Chick," replied Nick, "but I'm out of it, and there's a fine collection of them in number thirteen."

"Is it time to move, then?"

"It is. They don't know where they're at, but in a few minutes they'll take fright and scatter."

"I'm all ready."

"Get at them, then."

Chick waved his arm.

Immediately a number of men in uniform came from doorways along the street and approached.

"Is this one of them?" asked the first who came up, laying his hand on Nick's shoulder.

The detectives laughed.

"He's all right," said Chick. "Break into number thirteen and take everybody you find there."

"You've done well," said Nick. "I'm off."

"More to do?"

"Yes. I've got to catch the head of the gang and make her confess. If I don't manage it right, she'll give me the slip, and nobody will believe what I say of her."

Chick joined the men who were running toward number thirteen, and Nick hurried toward the main street.

CHAPTER VIII.

VLASDA AGAIN.

Chick had been in Moscow several days longer than Nick. He had gone first to St. Petersburg, where he had called on the chief of the national police. Chick told this officer what he and his chief were in Russia for, and easily got the little assistance he wanted.

This was a written order to the Moscow chief to put men under Chick's orders at any moment when he should ask for them. The order had not been shown until that day.

Two days before Nick arrived in Moscow, Chick received a letter from him, saying that he was near, and where he would be on the first day of his arrival. From

the time, therefore, when Nick set foot in Moscow, Chick kept him in view.

He was near when Nick was arrested, and he had been shadowing him on this day when he went about with Boris and Goritz.

So when Nick stopped to inquire the way and mentioned number 13 Street Pevsky, Chick knew what was wanted of him, and immediately hurried to police headquarters.

There he showed his order, and a squad of men was assigned to go with him. He had them posted all around the fatal number almost as soon as Nick went in to meet Schlepka.

Chick knew perfectly well how important it was that he should be on time, for he had Vlasda's letter in his possession.

Nick had managed to give it to him when they stood talking on the main street, and it was at that time that Nick put in the envelope a sheet of blank paper instead of the message Vlasda had written.

When Nick now came to the main street, he hailed a passing cab.

"What do you want?" demanded the driver, pulling up.

"A ride, of course," replied Nick.

"Jump on behind a wagon, then. I won't have ragamuffins in my cab."

He touched the horses with his whip. Nick already had his hand on the door, and was opening it.

"Get out!" cried the driver, cutting at the detective with his whip.

Nick simply leaped into the cab. He pulled the door to, and knelt on the floor so as to keep his head below the window.

For a moment he had a great fear that his plan would fail, for in a carriage just then approaching he saw the very woman whom he wanted to capture.

It was Vlasda. She was in an open carriage, and with her was an elderly man who wore the uniform of a colonnel. Nick didn't want to see her just then, and much less did he want her to see him. His row with the cabman drew a little crowd, and Vlasda's carriage had to halt.

"What a nuisance!" he heard her exclaim. "We shall be late to dinner. Tell the coachman to run them down."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCESS IRMA.

The disguise as a stupid peasant which the detective wore during his interview with the woman Vlasda had not been sufficient to quell any suspicion that she may have felt regarding him—nor had it prevented him from recognizing, in her beautiful face, a striking likeness to one that he had seen before somewhere, but which he could not at the moment locate.

But during the scene with the men in the room with the trapdoor, and after it, his thoughts had been busy with that faint recollection.

It is doubtful if he could definitely have placed her, even then, but for this encounter upon the street while he was hidden inside the cab when she so ruthlessly directed that the driver of the conveyance in which she was seated should run down those who obstructed her passage.

But, seated beside the man who accompanied her, resplendent in the full glory of her matchless beauty, away from the environment of that secret meeting place of the nihilists, it came to him at once who she really was.

He was amazed. Had he ever seen her before in person he would have recognized her at once, but until then he had seen only photographs of her. But they were many. As a great beauty, her pictures were everywhere exhibited. For the woman Vlasda was no less a personage than the Princess Irma, daughter of Prince Paul.

The detective's course was selected for him by that incident. He determined upon a bold and daring one which would take him into scenes which he could not conjecture, but he did not hesitate.

While the carriage that held the princess was driven onward, Nick slipped from the one whose uses he had so forcibly preëmpted, leaving it by the door opposite that one at which the driver was still gesticulating and cursing—and he paused only long enough to fling a piece of money to the moujic.

It is doubtful whether the fact that a peasant should throw money to him, or that the man should escape from the cab so deftly, astonished the moujic the more, but it is certain that he stood quite still in his surprise until Nick had made good his escape.

Nick Carter's instantaneous decision at that moment had been to hold one more personal interview with the beautiful princess, but in doing so to make it appear—well, we will go with him, and see what he did.

The American consul stationed at Mascow was the detective's friend. His house was located only a short distance from where Nick Carter was at that moment.

When Nick darted away from the cab, he ran around the nearest corner, and then increased his speed until he arrived before the door of the consul's home.

The difficulties of entering there, in his peasant garb, were quickly overcome when he announced himself in perfect English. He was soon in the presence of his friend, the consul, and they were laughing together after the first greetings had been exchanged.

"This is one of the times when a friend in need is a friend indeed," the detective said.

"Good, old chap! I'm your friend. There is no doubt of that," the consul replied. "What can I do for you?"

"I want a disguise."

"Eh? Don't forget that I'm not a detective. You speak of disguises as if you referred to a pair of gloves."

"I suppose so."

"You know I don't carry disguises about with me in my waistcoat pocket, Nick."

"To be sure."

"So tell me what you do want."

"One of your best suits of clothes—we are about the same size."

"I think so. That's easy. What else?"

"A number of things to be procured for me by one of your servants from the chemist, a hairdresser, and so forth."

"All that will not be difficult."

"No."

"Make out your list. I will attend to that. Then I will take you to my dressing room for the clothing."

It is not necessary to detail the changes that Nick Carter made in the home of the American consul. They began with the bathroom, and ended at a table sumptuously spread with wholesome food. But the man who sat at the table with the consul looked not at all like the poor peasant who had asked admittance at the door not very long before.

Nick had changed himself into a perfect imitation of a Frenchman who might have been anything from a secret police officer in disguise, to a nobleman.

The things he had procured at the hair dresser's, and at the chemist's, and the other articles which the consul supplied, rendered it easy for him to complete an amazing make-up.

There was no semblance of Nick Carter left; there was nothing of any person whom any one in Moscow had ever seen.

He was, as he laughingly announced to his friend, Count De Tierney, and very much in need of pen, ink, and writing paper.

The consul conducted the detective to his office and supplied him with writing material. Nick seated himself at the desk and prepared two letters that he thought he would want to use.

When he left the house of the consul, he made his way by back streets to the railway station, and waited there in partial concealment, until the arrival of one of the through trains from the North.

Then he left the station boldly, summoned a conveyance, and had himself driven directly to the palace of Prince Paul.

Nick Carter already knew something of the habits of this Russian nobleman, and he was acting accordingly in order to carry out the plan he had so hastily formed while he watched the Princess Irma pass him in the street a little while before.

He knew, for example, that Prince Paul would not be at his home at that hour, and he believed he had good reason to suppose that the princess would be there—and it was the princess whom he desired to see and to interview just then.

It is not the easiest thing in the world to ingratiate oneself into the house of a nobleman when one is an utter stranger. But Nick Carter relied upon the letters he had pepared while he was at the home of the consul, and more than all upon the natural curiosity of a woman, when that woman was Princess Irma—because he now knew that Irma was likewise Vlasda.

So when the footman at the door stiffly announced that the prince was not to be seen save by appointment, Nick coolly replied:

"Send his secretary to me."

"But the secretary is not here."

"Then you, my good man, take this letter to the Princess Irma. Say that it is important, and tell her that I await her pleasure."

Even then the servant hesitated. But Nick's manner was so assured that, after a moment, the man reluctantly withdrew, seeking the princess.

Ten minutes passed, and then the servant returned.

This time he was all obsequiousness and deference. He did not apologize in words, but his manner was all that could be required as he bowed before the supposed Count De Tierney and requested that personage to follow him.

So Nick was conducted through the mansion to a private parlor, where two long windows opened upon a beflowered balcony which overlooked the beautifully appointed grounds between the rear of the palace and the river.

It was evidently part of the private suite of rooms of the princess.

She left a chair, at one of the small tables in the room as the detective entered, and advanced to meet him.

If he had thought her beautiful during that short interview when she had appeared as Vlasda, and had deemed her still more attractive when she passed him while he was hiding inside the cab, he saw her now, in her own parlor, in all the rare and resplendant fascinations of her own proper person at home, and amid her own natural environment.

Even Nick Carter caught his breath as he looked upon her when she advanced toward him with outstretched hand.

He bowed over it, fanning it with the slightest possible touch of his lips, then straightened up and stood back again away from her, bowing once more.

She held in her hand the letter he had sent in to her by the servant. She glanced at it, then at him, and thence back again to the sheet of paper.

He waited for her to speak, knowing that he must take his cue from what she might say, for he was playing his own game utterly in the dark, literally feeling his way as he advanced.

But Nick Carter had found the value of trusting many things to chance when that was necessary, and he did know one vital thing in regard to the young woman who faced him, which he would not hesitate to use if occasion required, and that was that she was Vlasda.

He had prepared the letter that he had sent in to her for just such an extremity as this one—and she had taken the bait. Would she also take the hook?

Instead of asking him about the note he had sent to her, she read it aloud to him, permitting the reading of it to take the form of the many questions she would have preferred asking all at once.

"I, the Count De Tierney, have purposely called at an hour when your noble father is absent, because my errand is to see you, the Princess Irma. I have come direct from Paris," was what she read. Then she raised her eyes and added:

"What does it mean, Count De Tierney?"

"Your highness has already guessed the meaning of it, or else your highness would not have received me," he made answer.

She bit her lip, and drummed with one toe upon the rug.

"What does it mean?" she repeated.

"I have come to you direct from Paris," he replied, "as the note states."

"To see me?"

"To see you, princess."

"Your errand must be of importance."

"Your highness knows that it is."

"You have a message for me?"

"I have, perhaps, a message for one who is called Vlasda, princess."

"Oh!" she cried, and started back, away from him.

He smiled, held his ground, and waited.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRINCESS' DILEMMA.

The princess turned white, then flushed red. She caught her breath sharply. But withal she controlled herself admirably, and replied coldly:

"I do not know such a person."

The detective bowed deferentially.

"In that case I will go away," he said, and he actually started to do so.

She permitted him to get as far as the door before she recalled him. Her manner showed that she was equally afraid to let him go and to permit him to remain. He had puzzled her sorely, and he offered no word of explanation.

There is an old saying that if you scratch a Russian, you find a tartar. She demonstrated it, for she stamped her foot impatiently upon the rug and frowned heavily, while her brilliant eyes blazed, for a moment, dangerously.

"Come back here!" she ordered.

He turned about obediently and came and stood before her a second time.

"Who sent you to me?" she demanded.

"Pardon me, princess, but do you speak now as Princess Irma, or are you speaking in behalf of that other person, whose name I have mentioned?"

"I am Princess Irma. Who sent you to me?"

"Certain friends of Vlasda gave me reason to believe that I could obtain information from you concerning her."

"What business have you to transact with her?"

"Pardon me again. But that would be better told to her in person, would it not?"

"Again, who sent you?"

"That, also, I could tell only to her—to Vlasda."

"You came to me from Paris, and from——" She stopped without pronouncing the name that was evidently upon the tip of her tongue, and concerning which the detective had no idea; but he replied without hesitation:

"Yes."

"Have you a sign, or a password, or a letter, or anything at all deliver to me?"

"To Vlasda, perhaps. Not to you, princess."

"You are insinuating that I can tell you how and where to find this Vlasda."

"I am acting under instructions, princess."

"You will have to go away as you came, unless you can prove yourself."

"Prove myself what, princess?"

"Count De Tierney, we are wasting time. It is quite evident to me that you believe the woman Vlasda to whom you have referred, is now in this house."

"I do."

"Even that I am she?"

"Yes."

"Then what is your message?"

"First, before I deliver it, you must prove to me that you are Vlasda—by admitting that you are. One could ask no greater proof than that."

The princess hesitated for another moment. She passed to the doorway and looked out into the corridor. She stepped outside the window upon the balcony and gazed up and down the grounds. She returned and shook the curtains as if to see that nobody was concealed behind them. Then she returned to him again.

"I am Vlasda," she said, in a low tone, that was barely above a whisper.

Nick Carter bowed with all the solemnity of one who hears merely the verbal admission of a truth that has been known to him all along. He thrust a hand into one of the pockets of the borrowed clothing he wore, and produced another envelope that he had prepared at the home of the consul.

It was addressed merely with the one word, or name, Vlasda, and it was sealed.

She looked down upon it with startled eyes, trembling, for that name, thus boldly inscribed upon an envelope, was against all the traditions of the order to which she had sworn allegiance and of which she now was one of the leaders.

"Take it," he said, extending the envelope toward her.

She reached out a tentative hand, took the letter, but stood quite still with it in her fingers, and without attempting to open it.

"Read it," he said. And she mechanically broke the seal, acting as if she were impelled by something greater than her own strength to obey the directions he gave her.

"Read the letter," he directed.

She unfolded it, spread it open, and held it before her eyes.

Then she uttered a low cry of terror, staggered backward, and let the letter flutter to the floor.

Nick made no effort to recover it. He had no need to do so since he already knew what it contained, having written it himself.

When he decided to seek the princess and an interview, he determined to put her to supreme test of her loyalty to her father, and that short letter was the substance of his effort.

He knew that when noblemen and noblewomen are induced to adopt nihilism, they do it from impulse, or because they are forced into it by some outside circumstance. They are rarely nihilists at heart. He did not believe that she was one.

He waited in silence until she bent forward and recovered the letter. It was no part of his play acting to restore the fallen paper to her.

She crushed it in her hand. Then she turned fiercely upon him and demanded:

"Do you know the contents of that letter?"

"Yes," he replied truthfully.

"And, therefore, what I am directed—nay, ordered, to do?"

"Yes."

"And you, *you* approve?"

"Madam, it is no part of my duty to approve, or to disapprove," he said coldly.

"I am ordered to murder my own father," she said dully.

"So it would appear. But, in nihilism we have but one father, one mother, one claim upon us—*the cause*."

"I hate it!" she cried.

"Be careful, princess," he admonished.

"I hate it and everything connected with it!" she cried again.

"Remember that you may be overheard," he cautioned.

"And also that you might go away from here and repeat to others what I have said in your presence," she retorted, with scorn in her voice.

He bowed his head silently. She came a step nearer to him.

"Would you do that?" she demanded, in a low tone.

"I would have no choice," he replied.

"You would betray me? *Me?*"

"One does many disagreeable things for the cause," he told her evasively.

"Would you do that?"

"Suppose I should reply, princess, that I would not betray you? What then?"

"I would bless you," she said impulsively.

"Very well, I promise you that no nihilist shall ever hear from me a repetition of the words you have used in this room to-day, or any part of them."

"Thank Heaven for that!" she murmured brokenly, scarcely knowing what she said.

"But, princess, that will not save you," he told her.

She looked up quickly, and he added:

"You still have the order to carry out."

"To have my own father killed. Yes. Yes."

"And if you refuse—the penalty that you must suffer would be the same as if some person went now and said that you were a traitor to the cause."

"I know. I know."

"I have still something else to say to you, princess," he told her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I am to report to you that the dreaded detective from America, Nick Carter by name, is in the city, and that he is working against our interests."

"I know it already," she murmured.

"Perhaps, princess, you have already taken measures to rid yourself of his presence in Moscow."

"I have."

"And—pardon me—have you directed that he shall be put out of the way?"

"He has, perhaps, already been disposed of," she replied indifferently.

"So—it makes a difference to you, princess, who the person is who is to be executed. When it is your father, the prince, it is horrifying. But when it is merely an American citizen—pouf!—what of it? Murder is not so bad then, is it?"

"Who and what is Nick Carter that I should care what becomes of him?" she retorted.

"But perhaps there are others who would care as sincerely as you would care about the fate of your father. Perhaps, at his home, there are persons who love him."

She shrank away from the detective, covering her face with her hands.

"I had not thought of that," she murmured.

"Where is this man Carter now?" he demanded.

"I do not know."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"And have you sent him to his doom?"

"Yes."

"Do you feel no pity for him, now that the same thing has come home to you? Now that you stand in such grave danger yourself?"

"Pity for him? Yes. But what good does it do?"

"Perhaps it is not too late to countermand your orders, princess."

She sighed and flung out her hands in a gesture half of despair.

"It was too late, hours ago," she replied. "But now he is floating in foul water, beneath the city, toward the river."

"You think so?"

"I know it."

"Did you order it so?"

"No. I ordered only that he should be made a prisoner and kept confined for the present. But those who went with him did not return, and because they did not come back to me, I am sure that the detective has already been sacrificed."

"And if he is dead, princess——"

"Don't!" she interrupted him.

"If he is dead, princess, his death lies at your door—and is that any less a crime to be regretted than if you carried out the order that you now hold in your hand?"

"Don't!" she repeated.

CHAPTER XI.

A STARLING ANNOUNCEMENT.

"Princess, who is Captain Schlepka?" Nick Carter asked abruptly.

She started as if the point of a pin had pricked her, and flung up her head in a gesture of sudden defiance.

Nick Carter smiled, and she saw the smile. Her start, and the manner of it, and her resentment at that single question, told the detective that he had guessed rightly concerning her. And he decided to pursue the advantage thus gained.

Noblewomen like Princess Irma do not join with conspirators unless induced to such an act by some emotion that is far greater than patriotism, however mistaken—and when all is said, there is only one emotion that influence women greatly.

Nick pursued his advantage. He asked a second question, which did not appear to depend upon the first one, but which unquestionably did so.

"Why did you became a nihilist?" he demanded.

Again she started, and this time she came a step nearer to him, and looked at him strangely for a moment.

"Why do you ask those questions?" she asked.

"For information, princess."

"But how can the answers interest you?"

"Because I can see that you are not a nihilist at heart."

"And, perhaps, would betray me for that?"

"I have already given you my word that I will not betray you, princess."

"True. Forgive me. I had forgotten."

"Now, perhaps you will reply to my questions."

"What is the need to do so? How can the replies interest you—if you do not mean to betray me?"

"Perhaps, princess, I may be forgiven for feeling some interest in you."

"You? Feel interest in me? That is absurd."

"No, it is not absurd. You are a woman. You are young. You are beautiful. You have been misled, misdirected. Is it not so?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes."

"And—was it not this man Schlepka who misled you as to the true meaning and aim of nihilism?"

"Yes," she murmured.

"Pardon me, princess, but I feel that I must know the truth. You have entered into this great conspiracy which now requests, demands, at your own hands, the death of your own father, because of love for Captain Schlepka, have you not?"

"Yes," she murmured again. Then: "Yes; oh, yes."

"Then you are now a nihilist only because of his influence over you?"

She nodded an affirmative.

"And, is it he who has succeeded in placing you at the head of this branch of the society?"

"He did it; yes."

"Princess, you are not a nihilist at heart, are you?"

"No, no, no, no."

"Nor am I, madam."

She raised a pair of startled eyes to his while she backed away from him as if in fear.

"I do not at all understand you," she gasped. "One moment you make me believe that you are sent here to me by the Paris circle, with that dreadful order. The next instant you impress me with the idea that you are, after all, a spy who is seeking to work my ruin in one way or another. Who and what are you?"

"I am one who would save you from yourself, if I can—if it is not too late."

"Save me? Save me from myself? What do you mean by that?"

"The answer is even now in your own heart, princess."

"But how could you save me? Once a person is drawn into this awful thing, there is no withdrawals possible. The fate of that person is sealed forevermore."

"I am not so sure of that, princess."

"Are you——" she stopped, and looked closely at him, bending nearer as she did so. "Are you then a traitor to the cause, yourself?"

"Perhaps, princess, I feel very much as you do about it. Perhaps this is the first opportunity that either of us has had to express an open opinion. You have said that you hate it all. So do I. You have said that you hated everything connected with it. So do I. So, we stand on even ground, do we not?"

She looked about her furtively, terrorized.

"Hush!" she exclaimed.

"Why? There is no one to hear us."

"One never knows. There are always spies about."

"Spies, I grant you, but no listeners—at least there are none near enough to hear us now, are there?"

"One never knows," she repeated. "Why—why—tell me why you are a traitor, too?"

"One could not know what nihilism is without being traitor to it, could one?"

"No; oh, no."

"Any class of people who deal in assassination must be an abomination in the eyes and to the soul of any self-respecting person, princess."

"And how truly you speak now, count."

"Princess, you became a nihilist because you loved a man. You did not know what nihilism meant. You only knew that he believed in it. Knowing that, you believed you would be content. Is that so?"

"Why, yes."

"When you became a member of the circle and pierced to the inner depths of it, and discovered what it really was, you hated it. Is it not so?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"And now, that dreadful thing of which you are a member, and which owns you body and soul if you will let it own you, claims the life of your own father. And more, it insists that *you* shall be the instrument of his execution. Is it not so?"

"Oh, it is all so horrible."

"Princess, I have put it all to you in this manner to ask of you a question. Do you still love the man who has brought all this trouble upon you?"

"*Love him?* Love Schlepka? I *hate* him. Oh, how I do hate him."

"Since when, princess?"

"Since the beginning."

"Of what?"

"Of my association with those dreadful people."

"But, can you not rid yourself of his influence, princess?"

"No, no. That is impossible, now."

"Yet—I was just thinking—was it he whom you sent to take care of this man Carter, to imprison him, and whom you think may have put him to death, instead?"

"Yes."

"I know something about that same Nick Carter, princess."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"I was wondering how you would feel about it if it should turn out that instead of Schlepka's putting the detective to death, Nick Carter had, perhaps, got the better of him, and turned the tables upon him?"

"How I should feel in such a case?" She laughed harshly. "I would clap my hands with joy," she cried.

"You would regard yourself as well rid of the man who had dragged you into nihilism?"

"Indeed I would."

"Then, perhaps——"

She held up a warning hand and stopped him.

"Somebody is coming," she said.

There was a step in the corridor outside the room, and after a moment a tapping against the panels.

For an instant she looked about her wildly. Then, with a gesture almost of despair, she pointed toward the heavy curtains which hung beside the window which gave upon the balcony over the private park.

Nick stepped behind one side of them as she went to the door and threw it open. It was Prince Paul, Irma's father, who came in at the door. He peered around him curiously for a moment, then asked her:

"Where is the gentleman who came to call upon me?"

"He has gone," said Irma.

"But I was told that he was here, Irma. That when he found that I was not at home, he sent a message to you, and you received him."

"He was here, but he has gone," she replied.

"Who was he, and what did he want?"

"He said he was Count De Tierney, from Paris. I don't think I know what he did want."

"But I do not know such a person, Irma."

"I did not think that you did know him. He did not impress me as a person whom you would have known. In fact, it seemed to me as if he was probably a spy of some sort. That is why I was gracious with him—and then let him go."

The prince shrugged his shoulders. Then he said:

"That reminds me of what has brought me back here at this hour, daughter. Everybody is seeking Captain Schlepka, and it is reported that you were seen to speak with him to-day. The colonel wants him badly. Did he tell you where he was going?"

She shook her head, then replied:

"I have no idea where he is now."

"Did he say where he was going when he left you?"

"No," she answered.

The prince turned away. Irma called after him.

"What is wanted of Captain Schlepka?" she asked, in a low tone.

The prince paused, hesitated, then turned and faced his daughter.

"It grieves me to tell you," he replied, "but you will have to know the truth some time, and as well now, as ever. Captain Schlapka is suspected of nihilistic tendencies, and must be brought before the board of officers for investigation."

She started back, resting one hand upon the back of a convenient chair.

"Is it true?" she demanded breathlessly.

"Yes, my daughter."

"And—tell me—are others implicated with him, perhaps?"

"As yet, no. But who can say what may develop?"

"Who, indeed?" she murmured, in reply.

CHAPTER XII.

A CHANCE OF BETRAYAL.

Nick Carter came from his place of concealment as soon as the prince had gone.

It was evident to him that the princess had momentarily forgotten his presence in the room, for she stood with her back toward him, still leaning upon the chair which half supported her, and she was apparently lost to all sense of her surroundings.

He watched her silently. He heard her sigh deeply, catch her breath again and again, then straighten herself as with an effort. And he heard her murmur in an undertone, so low that he could barely hear the words:

"My husband!"

So, that was her secret?

She had been secretly married to the scoundrel who had nearly, if not utterly, wrecked her entire future by inveigling her into the meshes of nihilism. At all events, the knowledge of it saved her from harsher judgment on the part of the detective.

He stepped forward and touched her upon the arm, and she wheeled upon him like a young tigress. But, seeing him, she remembered, and she sank upon the chair against which she had been leaning, and bowed her head in her hands, weeping silently.

"Why do you weep, princess?" the detective asked.

She did not reply.

"Is it because the man you have loved is now charged with a crime against the czar?"

She shook her head.

"Is it because you fear what may come to you through the betrayal of Captain Schlepka?"

She raised her head then, and replied:

"No. I think I am glad that it has happened. Glad, you understand."

"But why, princess? You are now in great danger—if he should be caught."

She did not reply directly to him. Instead, she said:

"I was thinking of something you suggested to me a little while ago when you ventured the opinion that the detective, that Mr. Carter, might have got the better of him in a struggle they may have had, and that—that—that——"

"I think I understand you," he said softly.

She nodded.

"He was your husband, princess. You were secretly married to Schlepka. That is so, is it not?"

"Yes. It is true."

"And if he is—er—lost, you are well rid of the man."

"Yes, yes. I thought him almost a saint, but he is, oh, so bad—so thoroughly bad. Long ago I lost all respect for him. Many times, in my desperation, I have thought I would rid myself of him. Does it not seem strange that one who has been reared as I was should even contemplate such a vile thing as murder?"

"I think, as a nihilist, you have had to consider it many times."

"Yes," she said, and shuddered.

Then she straightened herself suddenly, and crossed the room.

"You must go," she said, speaking sharply.

"Why?" he asked.

"I have a duty to perform."

"You mean that you will, even now, carry a warning to your husband?"

"I must."

"Yes," he replied, after thinking for a moment. "I think you must do that—for your own sake if for no other reason. It is due to you that, not being a nihilist at heart, and having no sympathy for the cause that they espouse, you should take every possible measure to protect yourself against the consequence of an exposure of Captain Schlepka's misdeeds."

"Thank you."

"If he is alive, it is your duty to find him. But before we part, and again for your own sake, I wish to be assured of one thing concerning you, princess."

"Of what?" she asked.

"If you escape the consequence you are now facing, what will be your course afterward?"

"In regard to what?"

"In regard to nihilism?"

"I shall avoid all association with it as I would shun a plague."

"Will you promise me that, princess?"

She looked at him wonderingly and came closer to him.

"Why do you ask that of me?" she demanded. "You, yourself, are a nihilist."

"No, princess, I am not a nihilist."

"Then—you are a spy?"

She started away from him in terror.

"No; nor am I that sort of spy which you fear and detest."

"Then who and what are you?"

"I am a man who is interested in the good women of this small world of ours, and I have discovered that you are one of them. I came here purposely to discover how deeply and seriously you might have been inoculated with the poison of nihilism, and, thank Heaven, I find that, although you have touched it, it has not entered your blood and made a maniac and an assassin of you."

"Oh, no, no, no. Not that."

"I came here to save you if I could. But now I want you to save yourself."

"To save myself? How?"

"Go, as you just now thought of going, to find your husband. You probably know where to seek him, don't you?"

"Yes."

"If you can find him—if he has escaped from the struggle he must have had with Nick Carter and still lives—warn him of the dangers that threaten him and offer him his liberty if he will flee, provided he sees to it that you suffer no consequence because of your association with the fiends he induced you to join."

"Yes, yes. I understand."

"You have money. Therefore take sufficient with you for his needs, if he is alive. Tell him that when he gets to Paris, or to any other city where he may elect to go, you will send more to him—but tell him that it must all be on condition that he protects you."

"Why do you do all this for me, sir?" she asked, tears in her eyes.

"Because you are a woman, and I am a man."

"But there is—there must be—another reason than that."

"No; there is no other reason."

Again she drew up closely to him, and peered at him under lowered lids.

"Are you that Nick Carter?" she demanded suddenly.

Nick laughed aloud.

"If I were Nick Carter, it would not be necessary to leave you in doubt as to what happened in the struggle between Nick Carter and Captain Schlepka," he said.

"Who are you, then? I have asked you so many times, and you have not told me."

"I have told you that I am Count De Tierney."

"But that does not suffice. You speak French perfectly, but, nevertheless, I doubt——"

"Don't waste your time by doubting, princess. Go, now, upon your errand."

Again she started toward the door. Again she paused.

"I have forgotten one thing," she said.

"What is that?" Nick asked.

"Although I hate and despise Captain Schlepka, he believes that he is still madly in love with me."

"One could not severely censure him for that, princess."

"He will demand that I shall go into exile with him."

"I hardly think he will make that demand upon you, princess." We know why Nick did not think so, but she did not know it.

Nick could not know whether Schlepka could get through the sewer into which he had fallen, alive, or not.

It had been a chain of circumstances which had cast the captain into that fearsome place, and it was more than likely that he had perished there. But Nick Carter did not regard himself as responsible for the terrible fate, even if it had befallen the captain.

Still he had the feeling that the captain had perished, and he wanted the princess to know that the man was dead, if he really was so. That was why he so thoroughly approved of her going in search of him, ostensibly to warn him of his danger, and to provide him with means of escaping from it.

"Why don't you think he will make such a demand upon me?" she asked.

"Well, even if he should do so, you could refuse it."

"Not if he should insist."

"Why not?"

"He would demand that I should go, as the price of his silence. If he should go away, and then betray me, it would mean Siberia for me, in any case. Even the influence of my father could not save me."

"I quite realize that."

"What shall I do if he should make such a demand upon me?"

"Why, appear to accede to it. There would be no other way."

"But—I cannot go with him."

"I don't think you will need to do so."

"I would rather go to Siberia as a prisoner, than to live with him in Paris or anywhere else."

"But you can do no good at all by remaining here. Really, knowing what must have happened if he encountered Nick Carter, I have not much faith that you will find the captain alive. If he set out to kill the detective, and there was a fight—well, you must go now and find out what did happen."

"But you—can I not see you again?"

"Yes."

"Tell me how?"

"I will tell you when the time comes. I will not be far away from you, if you need me."

"How will you leave the house? I had not thought of that," she cried suddenly.

"This way," said Nick.

He waved his hand to her, stepped through the open window upon the balcony, and with a light leap, vaulted it to the ground below.

And the princess went in search of Captain Schlepka.

Nick, later that day, found that Irma was in danger

of having her connection with the nihilists discovered by the police. And he formed a plan for saving her. He would denounce her openly to her father, who would then shield her and save her from the fate that would await her if knowledge of her association with the nihilists became known to the Russian secret agents. This course would probably seem brutal to Irma, but Nick knew that he would be able to convince her afterward that he acted thus for her own welfare.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME SECRETS.

The royal boathouses were on the Oka River, about a half mile from the grand duke's palace.

The word "royal" did not mean that they were owned by the czar. It was simply a business name, many wealthy people keeping boats there, or hiring them for pleasure sailing. It was in the most fashionable part of the city.

When Nick arrived there, after his interview with Vlasda, he paid his cabman and then tried to hire a row-boat. He was now again dressed as a Russian peasant.

By putting up enough money to cover the cost of a boat, he got one and paddled down the river. It had become quite dark by the time he came opposite the palace. The gardens were lighted, and he could see a number of ladies and gentlemen moving about.

As he watched them, they began to go toward the buildings, most of them going to the palace, while one woman and two men went toward the house of Prince Paul.

"I wish I know who they are," thought Nick. "But I guess it's all right. It will be, if Prince Paul dines at home this evening."

He paddled toward the garden wall. Suddenly another boat came out from the shadow of the wall. One man was in it. He was paddling, and had a rifle across his knees.

It was just possible in the dusk to see that he wore the uniform of a soldier.

"Get out into midstream," this man ordered.

Ever since Captain Dimitri's discovery of the tunnel, a guard had been kept near the river end of it.

Nick kept on paddling.

"It's all right, Patsy," he whispered. "If you know the trick of opening the entrance to the tunnel, work it and take care of my boat." For the supposed guard was Patsy Garvan, Nick's second assistant.

It was possible that some of the nihilists might be caught by keeping a watch there. Patsy had gone to the grand duke and explained Nick's wishes. The grand duke had willingly done what was asked of him, appointing Patsy and a soldier as guards. The two took turns, never leaving the entrance to the tunnel unwatched.

Of course, Patsy had learned the trick of moving the stone that formed the door to the tunnel, and he now opened it.

"Unless I make some kind of a slip," whispered Nick, as he went in, "I think we shall be through with this job in half an hour."

"I hope so," Patsy returned.

The young fellow had not enjoyed his patient watching as much as he would have if there had been hard work to do. Nick had his pocket lantern with him, and he used it after getting inside the tunnel. When he came to the branch, he turned to the left, and soon halted at the mine under the house of Prince Paul.

There he listened sharply for a full minute with slide of his lantern closed. He heard no movement of any kind. At last he lit up the place and examined it thoroughly.

It was about eight feet from the bottom to the top. All the walls, including the top, seemed to be of earth. He suspected that this was not the case, however, and directed the rays of his lantern along the roof until he saw what he was looking for. It was a small iron ring. It was pressed into the dirt and could not be seen except by very careful searching with the strong light.

Captain Dimitri, looking around with a dim candle, had failed to see it. Nick jumped up and caught hold of it. He pulled it from the top and an opening appeared above him.

The roof dropped like a trap door, and it proved that it was not earth at all, but wood cleverly painted to look like dirt.

More than that, a ladder came down through the opening. It was worked by some simple machinery, as Nick found at a later time, that went into action when the ring was pulled. The ladder rested on the floor of the mine and Nick climbed it.

At the top he found himself in a corner of a cellar. He was shut in by piles of casks, but there was a way around them, and he followed it until he came to a flight of stairs. Up this he went and opened the door. The room he entered proved to be the butler's pantry.

At that moment the prince's butler was getting a roast bird ready for the dinner that was going on in the dining room beyond. The butler turned with a start. He was too astonished at first to cry out. Before he could make a sound, Nick leaped upon him and clapped his hand over his mouth.

"Is that the door to the dining room?" whispered Nick. "Nod if I am right."

The butler nodded and squirmed to get away.

The detective saw that the man was trying to slash him with a carving knife. He twisted the knife from the butler's hand, and then, holding his head under his arm, he dragged him to the door and opened it. Three persons were at the table, and servants stood behind

them. Two of the persons at the table were men. Nick did not know them. The other person, a woman, was the beautiful Vlasda herself.

The men leaped to their feet, and one of them started to draw a sword.

"Stop!" cried Nick, "I am Carter, the American detective!"

With this he raised his hand to ward off a blow, and at the same time tore away most of his disguise. Vlasda rose, trembling, pale, but silent.

"Carter!" cried one of them.

It was the grand duke. He was dining with his brother, Prince Paul.

"But what do you mean by coming into my house in such a way?" demanded Prince Paul.

Nick let go of the butler's head, knowing that the man would not now attempt to trouble him unless he was ordered to do so, and answered:

"I had to come this way to make that woman confess her crimes. She is the head of the conspirators who mean to blow up the palace."

"Outrageous!" cried the grand duke.

"My daughter, Irma, a nihilist!" exclaimed Prince Paul. "Impossible!"

"But true," said Nick. "I did not suspect her until she, under her assumed name of Vlasda, had condemned me to death. Then I saw how she came to know that I was engaged to hunt down the nihilists. You had told her."

He said this last to Prince Paul.

"Of course I told my daughter," replied the prince.

"That was all she needed," Nick went on, turning now to the beautiful princess. "If I had come to the door in disguise or out of it, none of you would have believed me. Moreover, this young woman would have had time to prepare denials. Now she cannot deny, for I have come into the house through the tunnel."

"Did Schlepka tell you about me?" demanded the princess.

Nick smiled, and turned to the men.

"Do you need a further confession?" he asked. "I am sorry for you, but you'd better have the plain truth. This young woman had no intention of blowing up her own house. She meant to have her father come home with her before the hour for the explosion. The palace alone would have been wrecked, the grand duke would have been killed, and then her father, the Prince Paul, would have come into the higher title and an immense property. The mine under this house was a blind. It was meant to make you think, as it did, that both buildings and families were doomed. It was also meant as a convenient way for her to meet her followers, who could come in from the river through the tunnel."

"Irma!" gasped the prince. "What is all this?"

"Oh!" she cried, as if suddenly driven mad, "it is all true. He has guessed every detail. I am no nihilist, father, though I made them believe so. But tell me!" she cried, turning to Nick, "what about Captain Schlepka?"

"He is on his way to the Oka River, through the sewer," replied the detective gravely.

"Oh!" she cried. "He was my husband! It was for him to come here secretly that the tunnel was dug first. After that we thought of blowing up the palace. Ah! I have nothing left to live for."

She stood at the farther side of the table.

Before any one could reach her to interfere, she had caught up a sharp knife, and plunged it into her heart.

Thus, before Nick had time to explain to her that he had taken this course to save her from the police, she herself defeated all Nick's plans by destroying herself.

The prince was terribly shocked, as was also the grand duke.

Patsy was relieved of watching the tunnel for the rest of the night, and a soldier was put in his place.

Next day the entrance to the tunnel was securely blocked up.

Nick and Patsy went together to a hotel, where they found Chick. The police, under Chick's orders, had raided No. 13 very successfully, capturing, in all, seventeen nihilists.

Another person was also at the hotel whom Nick was glad to see. That was his clever assistant, Ida Jones. She had just arrived from America.

"Too late, am I?" she asked.

"Yes, too late for this case," replied Nick. "But I am very much mistaken if there isn't something else ready for us in this country. I'm glad you're here, and we'll see if to-morrow doesn't bring us all some work to do."

THE END.

NICK'S FURTHER ADVENTURES IN RUSSIA.

"Nick Carter and the Convict Gang; or, Ida Jones to the Rescue"—the second of the series of stories of Nick Carter's remarkable adventures in the land of the czar—will appear in the next issue of this weekly. Ida Jones, Nicks' assistant, shows what a woman detective can do in tracking nihilists under circumstances both extraordinary and dangerous. Nick and his assistants are forced by the Russians to deal with both fire and sword. An unlocked door reveals a mysterious situation. There is a battle on a river, and a badly damaged clew to the identity of the nihilists is the result. A message is received from a governor, followed by a thrilling dash for liberty. In the end, the America detectives find a secret hiding place that leads to a capture under most exciting conditions. Nick narrowly escapes a trip to the Siberian mines. Don't miss this wonderful story. It is No. 812; out July 20th.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Mississippi Senator Talks at Yazoo.

United States Senator John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, in an address in Yazoo, Miss., said, of a movement he opposed:

"These men try to apologize for their course, but their apology reminds me of that of the Yazoo office boy:

"A business man, looking up from an important letter he was drafting, said to this boy testily:

"'Don't whistle at your work, Calhoun.'

"'I ain't workin', sir,' Calhoun answered. 'I'm only just whistlin'.'"

Big Hats Save Women from Injury.

New York has demonstrated that the much-derided big hat has its uses, after all. When a trolley car was overturned in Brooklyn the other day the only passengers who escaped unhurt were women who wore big hats which protected them from flying glass.

Every pane of glass was shattered. The passengers fell in a heap among the broken glass on the under side and were showered with the splinters from the windows on the upper side.

Strength Proved in Meat Diet.

An omniverous female rat ran 5,447 miles in a treadmill as against 492 miles covered by a vegetarian female rat. In this result, announced by Professor Slonaker, of Leland Stanford University, he sees the solution of a problem that has been puzzling the world for years.

The vegetarians, according to Professor Slonaker, are wrong, and henceforth we may eat our steaks and chops with the consciousness that we shall probably do more and better work than our neighbors who stick to a vegetable diet.

The professor says the New York *American*, took sixteen rats and kept them in revolving cages for the twenty-five odd months of their lives. On each cage was a recording apparatus registering every movement of the animals. To all the same food was given save that meat was added to the omniverous diet of half the rats about three times a week.

The experimenter found besides the figures showing the added capacity of the meat-eating female that the meat-eating male ran 1,588 miles to 451 for the vegetarian male.

"My conclusion," says the professor, "is that those animals, including man, which have small amounts of meat included in their diet develop by far the greater efficiency, grow almost twice the size, and live to a great age."

Here is a chance for those who think no meal complete without meat to patronize their vegetarian friends and to point to themselves with pride as the people who accomplish things.

Changes in New York Real Estate.

The upper corner of Wall Street and Broadway, New York, was once occupied by the Carvells' retail book store, and almost directly opposite was the City Hotel, the center of New York society for balls and fashionable receptions. The site is now occupied by the Boreel Building, and is still owned by this family, which inherited it from John Jacob Astor—their kinsman. The City Hotel probably brought John Jacob Astor $10,000 a year, but the present building has a rent roll of ten times that amount.

Directly below Wall Street, in Broadway, was the Globe Hotel, which was Washington Irving's resort when he visited New York, and on the opposite side stood old Trinity Church, while the next corner below was occupied by Grace Church, where Dickens attended service during his first visit to America. Yes, there has been some change since then.

Scarehead Journalism.

Of Doctor Talcott Williams, the brilliant and erudite editor, who is to direct the Pulitzer School of Journalism, a Philadelphia reporter said the other day:

"Doctor Williams is no friend of journalism of the flashy, ill-informed, scare-head type that panders to the lowest taste. Pointing one day to a very silly scare head, he said it reminded him of a theatrical manager off in a backwoods town.

"An actor suggested to this manager a week of 'Othello.'

"'Any murders in it?' the manager asked.

"'Yes, two murders and a suicide,' was the reply.

"'All right,' said the manager. 'Call it "Othello's Double Murder and Suicide," not just "Othello," that's too tame, and I reckon we can count on a pretty good week's run.'"

French Army Will Exclude Criminals.

Five years' experience has convinced the French military authorities that the admission of criminals into the home army has had results which do not justify the continuation of the experiment. It is stated that "at last we shall soon be without Apaches in the French army." The chamber has passed, without discussion or dispute, a bill presented by the minister of war with a view to removing the number of common-law criminals admitted to the army. The never-do-wells will rejoin the African battalions, which they must never have left. An average of more than five years has sufficiently proved that progress had wandered too far down the path of unthinking charity.

British Royal Servant Retires.

After spending over sixty-one years as a royal servant at Windsor Castle, the king's residence near London, England, Benjamin Holt has just retired, at the age of 85.

Mr. Holt has many interesting recollections of his long term of service with royalty. He distinctly remembers King William IV. and Queen Adelaide, and their visit to the "Montem," an Eton College festival which has long since ceased to be celebrated. Their majesties also visited Egham races, which are also defunct.

Adhalloon sent up in Windsor Great Park on the occasion of Queen Victoria's first visit to the castle, before her coronation, is another of his memories, and he recalls an amusing incident which took place at the beating of the Eton boundaries.

This custom was being duly observed, and the procession proceeded merrily along, marking the boundaries of the ancient college town, when a learned doctor of Eton College was pushed into the Willow Brook.

Fish Caught Nearly Three Miles Under Water.

The Prince of Monaco presented recently to the Academy of Sciences, in Paris, some notes about cephalopods captured by him at an average depth of about 13,000 feet.

Cephalopods are octopuses, cuttlefish, and squids. These deep-sea creatures, he said, have such transparent bodies that all their internal arrangements can be seen distinctly, and even the course of the nerves through the head and tentacles may be traced.

Several years ago, says the New York *World*, the prince described some cephalopods which had scarchlights fixed upon their heads.

He now describes a species with eyes of which the lower half is luminous, so that the eye serves both for seeing and for lighting.

Any animal that inhabits such depths as these do must have artificial light, for the sun's rays cannot penetrate, and all is absolute darkness. So the eyes of these cephalopods are perfectly adapted to their environment.

Roosevelt a Life-saver.

Colonel Roosevelt enacted the rôle of life-saver as he was leaving New Haven, Conn. A party of Norwood, Mass., high-school girls were on the train to which the Roosevelt private car *Independence* was attached, and they alighted at New Haven to get a look at the candidate.

The train moved out unexpectedly, before the girls had time to get back to their car. All managed safely to board it, however, but Miss Ruth Vance, who made a leap for the *Independence*. She caught the rail, but was slipping under the wheels, according to her story, when Colonel Roosevelt reached out and dragged her aboard.

The rescue was cheered.

Expert Baggage Smashers.

Henry Clews, the New York banker, at a dinner in Newport, said of American traveling:

"It is delightful to travel in America, but I think that American porters handle our luggage a little roughly.

"Once, at a certain station, I was amazed and pleased to hear a uniformed official shout to a burly porter:

"'Hi, what are you knockin' them trunks about like that for?'

"The porter had been lifting great trunks above his head and hurling them down on the floor furiously, but now he stopped wide-eyed in astonishment.

"'What's that, boss?' he said.

"'What do you mean by knockin' trunks about like that?' repeated the official. 'Look

at the floor, man. Look at the dents you're makin' in the concrete. Don't you know you'll lose your job if you damage the company's property?'"

English Author Would Chloroform Murderers.

Chloroform as a substitute for the gibbet in the administering of capital punishment to murderers was recommended to a Chicago newspaper by John Galsworthy, English author and dramatist and student of penology.

The English novelist talked of penal laws and customs in the United States and in England at length.

"Killing a man by hanging him by the neck is most certainly barbaric," he asserted. "If capital punishment is to be meted out, why not do it by the use of drugs. Chloroform, for instance, could be used to end the life of a condemned man as effectively as breaking his neck."

Notice to Clock Watchers.

A New Haven, Conn., paper, in an obituary notice of a respected and successful citizen of that city, tells that, in his earlier and struggling days, "he worked without watching the clock." Such men are of the sterling sort. They found families and build up and keep strong cities, States, and nations. Whether one works without watching the clock just because he takes real interest in his work makes some difference, probably, in the long run.

The industrious and ambitious job holder, says *Judge*, is apt to be thrifty and to save his money; whereas, the man who works because his work interests him is not so likely to become rich, but he will probably get more satisfaction out of life, and that counts for much to one who has taken off the harness and can give his time to reminiscences. Moreover, those who work without watching the clock find that the hours of toil pass as on wings, while to clock watchers time appears to have feet of lead.

Some New Inventions.

A Maine inventor has combined a gasoline traction engine and thrashing machine on one set of wheels, the same power being used for both purposes.

A French engineer has invented a sand box for locomotives in which a stream of water is used to carry the sand to the rails with but little waste.

A telephone small enough to be carried in the vest pocket and which can be attached to connections provided in public places is an English invention.

An attachment for phonographs by which a violin can be connected with a record and made to produce music has been invented by a Wisconsin man.

Congressman Hits the Hard Drinkers.

Congressman Crumpacker was talking entertainingly the other day about a politician, now gone to his reward, who was at one time the leading drunkard of Valparaiso, Ind., where Crumpacker dwells.

One afternoon this earnest drunkard met on the street an evangelist who was holding a series of meetings in the town.

"My friend, do you drink?" inquired the revivalist.

The other man stared at him a moment, and then said:

"Is it just an idle question or an invitation?"

On another occasion, the same man having been asked to share a libation, remarked:

"There are a thousand reasons why I shouldn't take a drink, but I can't think of a blamed one of 'em."

Once a friend boasted: "It's very seldom that I ever drink anything," and our hero said: "Oh, it's frequently that I ever do, either."

Plans for Boxing in New York.

Facing the probability of Madison Square Garden being reopened as a boxing-club arena, the National Sporting Club issues a statement which they think may interest the public:

"The National Sporting Club is prepared to meet any bid made for bouts between men of merit, and will not be outbid. A larger percentage will be offered by this club than can be offered by any other club in Greater New York. This is made possible by the ability of the club's patrons to pay good prices for shows.

"The National Sporting Club offers $16,000 for a ten-round bout between McFarland and Wells, McFarland and Wolgast, Wolgast and Wells, or Johnny Kilbane and Knock-out Brown. Patrons of this club may feel assured that they will get the best there is on the market, at all times."

Music Teaching in Public Schools.

The United States Bureau of Education has been observing with interest the beneficial effects of the musical training given to the public-school children of St. Louis.

The results attained prove that there is in the American child, says the New York *American*, a potential musical ability of high order. Each graduate of the high schools is familiar with at least fifty grand opera selections as well as many oratorios. In five years, 2,500 children sang classical choruses with a symphony orchestra of country-wide reputation, and showed themselves familiar with Beethoven, Wagner, Grieg, Verdi, Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Offenbach.

And the method by which this pleasing result is accomplished is by singing to them.

"Any child can be taught to sing," says the supervisor of music, "if the teacher will sing or play the strain often enough. In the end, technique comes to him easily, almost unconsciously, and the new way of teaching singing by singing produces more sight-readers of music than the old method of teaching music by practicing the scale."

Moreover, the effect of this system is shown in the appreciation of fine music by the pupils. Of the 80,000 school children there is scarcely one who does not prefer classical music to ragtime.

When other cities develop the musical taste of their children as St. Louis has done then we may expect to produce composers; but if we never do that, still the uplifting influence of such an education is of incalculable value.

College Girls Make Model Wives.

Stung by the oft-repeated accusation that college girls do not make good wives, Professor Amy Hewes, of Mount Holyoke College, at South Hadley, Mass., offered some data among the graduates of that school, covering a period of half a century.

It appears from her researches that 41.9 per cent of the graduates of Mount Holyoke have married. The percentage seems low, but it is explained by the fact that information could not be secured from all the older graduates, and many of the recent classes are not yet beyond the marriageable age. Anyhow, the percentage is sufficient to disprove the theory that college women do not marry. Fifty-eight per cent of the men who wedded the Holyoke graduates were college bred, showing fairly well that like seeks like, and that the girls of Holyoke exercise some discrimination in accepting husbands.

More important still is the fact brought out by Miss Hewes that not one divorce has been asked for or granted to a graduate of Holyoke, and no domestic trouble, so far as she could find out, has ever crossed the threshold of the homes of these college folks.

Miss Hewes' figures, so far as they go, are an effectual answer to the foolish assertion that college women are not fit for wives.

First "Health Marriage" in Chicago.

The first "health marriage" under Dean Walter T. Sumner's requirement of medical certification was performed in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Chicago. Miss Ruth Palmer and A. W. Bode, a telephone operator in the Chicago police department, both were required to bring certificates from reputable physicians that they were neither physically nor mentally deficient.

Dean Sumner's plan for medically inspected marriages has been approved by Bishop Anderson, of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Chicago.

Cheap Potash for All.

Large quantities of potash have been found in various States of the Union, but the deposits have been combined with refractory rocks, making the cost of reduction and refining prohibitive. The formation in California where potash has been discovered, says the *Times*, of Troy, N. Y., is said to be such that the potash can be readily and cheaply secured, and the supply is believed to be inexhaustible. The rates for transportation, at present chiefly by rail, may make the potash costly to Eastern consumers, but it is likely that the opening of the Panama Canal, with water carriage lessening freight rates, will effect a change.

Aniline Dyes to Cure Cancer.

Doctor William James Morton, of New York, announced what it is believed may prove a cure for that dreaded disease—cancer.

It consists in the use of the aniline dyes, and is built upon the theory that each one of these dyes has what is known as an elective affinity for the different tissues of the body. It is believed dyes have been found that have a destructive effect upon the cancer tissues, and prevent the progress of the disease. The two used so far are eosin and negrosin.

Doctor Morton said: "I selected five cases of inoperative cancer, and placed them upon a purely chemical treatment. The result was far beyond my expectations.

"As to the method of treatment pursued, it has consisted of administering by the mouth certain of the aniline dyes, on the presumption that they will show a selective affinity for the cancer cells, and subsequently administering—say after an inter-

val of several days—a salt of a metal which I assume will combine with the cancer cell. Chemicals are found to exert an elective injurious effect on organic cells, as well as on parasites."

Pauper Gets $125,000.

Adam Michael, an aged inmate of the Niagara County almshouse, near Lockport, N. Y., for eight years, is on his way to Germany to take over property worth $125,000. His niece, Margaret Hordtung, came to this country, and, after two months' search, found him in the almshouse. Michael came to America thirty years ago, had hard luck and a long period of ill health, and was too proud to write to relatives in the fatherland. The little property he left has increased in value to half a million marks.

Women Jurors Accomplish Nothing.

The three women who were the first to sit on a Yuba County jury, at Marysville, Cal., followed the precedents set by many generations of male jurors and disagreed on their verdict.

Two of the women sided with five of the men for acquittal while Mrs. Nellie Eastman, who was chosen "foreladv," voted with four men for conviction in the case of Louis Ditzler, charged with having struck and choked a woman. The jury was liberated and was discharged after having announced that a verdict could not be reached.

Death via Air Route for First Woman Aviator.

Miss Suzanne Bernard, nineteen, who was qualifying at Buc, France, for a third test for an air pilot's license, fell with her biplane, a distance of sixty yards, and was horribly crushed. She died ten minutes afterward.

The young woman had gone through the first two tests in the most successful manner. She showed such intrepidity in these tests that her companions urged her to be more prudent and to always make the turns to the left. She disregarded this advice, and in addition to steering carelessly, made the turn to the right. The machine overturned and fell to the ground like a stone.

Mademoiselle Bernard took up aviation last September, and was the first woman aviator to be killed.

Hatpin Jab Makes Woman One-eyed.

Miss Julia Mason, of Libertyville, Iowa, was taken to a hospital as the result of a hatpin jab received in one of her eyes during a bargain-counter rush. Physicians said she had lost the sight of that eye.

Pulitzer Pupils Need Nose for News.

The Pulitzer School of Journalism, of Columbia University, will find the "nose for news" is more essential than any textbook it can add to its curriculum. And you cannot graft the "nose for news," says the Albany, Ind., *Press*, upon the young man who aspires to be a newspaper reporter.

Garibaldi's Granddaughter Discusses Equal Suffrage.

"American women are wonderful. They are energetic, enthusiastic, and quick to take up any new idea.

"The war between Italy and Turkey will be the salvation of Tripoli."

These are the opinions expressed, during her recent visit in New York, by Miss Italia Garibaldi, granddaughter of General Garibaldi, the famous Italian patriot. After a stay of several days in New York, she went to Chicago. She came to this country to attend the Methodist General Conference, in Minneapolis.

Miss Garibaldi was educated in this country and speaks English fluently. Before returning to her home in Rome she will deliver a number of lectures on various subjects, and will also devote much time to a study of the suffrage movement here.

"The suffrage movement has not made much headway in my country," she said. "We have suffrage leaders there, but they have not adopted the strenuous methods used in this country and in England to advance the cause.

"Over in Italy the women are not as energetic as they are here, and they are slow to take up any strenuous work. I am afraid it will be a good many years before they get out of the slow way they have of doing things."

U. S. Commissioner to Olympic Games.

James E. Sullivan, secretary of the American Olympic committee, received a cablegram from the secretary of the Swedish-American Olympic committee stating that an American commissioner would be accepted. A copy of this dispatch was forwarded immediately to President Taft.

President Taft had declined to appoint an American commissioner because he understood that the other nations would not have any representative and that the international committee did not desire any.

The president was later deluged with letters from all over beseeching him to do so, as it was for the interest of the American athletes.

The president said unless he received word from the Swedish government that a commissioner from this country would be acceptable, he would not appoint any. Now that the Swedish commission feels so kindly, it is probable that the president will appoint the muchsought-for commissioner. It is believed that the honor will be conferred upon James E. Sullivan, who has been this country's representative at the past four Olympic meets.

Government Regulation of Express Rates.

The House of Representatives interstate and foreign commerce committee, at Washington, reported favorably a bill to amend the law giving the Interstate Commerce Commission authority over express companies.

Provision would be made for rate zones, the charges varying according to the distance the package was carried from the point of origin. A close working arrangement also would be provided between the express companies and the rural free delivery system of the post-office department.

A Bonaparte Princess Christened.

Bonapartists in Paris, France, held high festival because the splendors of Napoleonic history repeated themselves in the baptism of Marie Clotilde Bonaparte, daughter of Prince Victor Napoleon and Princess Clementine.

The infant princess gets the name Clotilde from her grandmother, who was a sister of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

Her godparents are two kings, an empress, and a dowager queen. They are the king of Italy, a first cousin of Prince Victor; the king of Belgium, a first cousin of Princess Clementine; ex-Empress Eugenie, who finances the Napoleonic movement, and the Dowager Queen Marguerita of Italy, also a cousin of the pretender.

Comparisons were made by the Bonapartists between this recent ceremony and that of 101 years ago, when Napoleon's son was baptized at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, for the infant king of Rome had similar royal godparents—the emperor of Austria, the king of Spain and Hortense Beauharnais, queen of Holland.

Madame Bonaparte, Napoleon's mother, whom he considered more than royal, also was the infant's godmother.

California Wants Elks.

A plan is on foot to restock the State of California with elk. It is proposed to obtain a trainload of elk from the Jackson Hole country of Wyoming, where the animals are starving to death, and to turn them at large in all sections of California, where thousands of acres of wild land will give excellent pasturage and allow them to propagate rapidly.

Chicago Movies Get the Choir Boys.

Positions as singers in motion-picture shows, in Chicago, are attracting so many choir boys that churches here are considering installing choir girls.

One church, the Trinity Episcopal, already has substituted a girl choir for the boys.

The girls sing at two services a day more willingly than did the boys.

Had Never Seen a White Woman.

In a new book on conditions in Africa, there is an interesting account of the daring exploits of Mary Gaunt among the villages and jungle paths of west Africa.

Starting at Lome, she made her way through savage tribes, who had never seen a white woman, to Half Assine, the border of the French ivory coast, making many inland journeys up the Volta River and at other points.

Over most of this journey she was accompanied only by native carriers, and the hardships she experienced among them is not the least part of the exciting narrative.

One is led on from chapter to chapter by the mere excitement of adventure and the marvel at what a frail human being will risk under the lure of exploration.

Mary Gaunt, too, is a keen observer, and her pen pictures of these African villages are both illuminating and interesting.

Her picture of Liberia can scarcely be considered a compliment to America's experiment in colonization. The Liberians possess a little strip of land along the coast, while back of them are the native tribesmen, with whom they are constantly at war. Even the capital is a place of dilapidated shacks, tumbling down over the heads of the owners.

The native, who is the descendant of the freed slave, despises work, and aspires only to "be a gentleman of leisure, to serve in the government service or in the church, to walk about in a black suit, with a high collar and a silver-mounted cane."

One can buy no fruit in the capital city, no chickens, no eggs. Bananas and limes have to be imported. Meat is to be had at rare intervals, and living is excessively high. The land is swamped under a heavy debt,

and under present management there seems little hope for the future.

Miss Gaunt makes many amusing allusions to the wives of English and German residents and the contrasting results of the environment upon them. But the book ought to be read both for the information it conveys and its thrilling narrative of travel. Its many illustrations add to its interest.

Italians Collaborate in Tragic Opera.

Gabriel D'Annunzio, the Italian author of "The Triumph of Death," and Pietro Mascagni, the famous Italian composer, author of "Cavalieri Rusticana," are collaborating in a tragic opera.

Music lovers are curious to see how the combination will turn out. Mascagni has the reputation of being difficult to deal with. His temper is uncertain, and he is very determined in his ideas, while the poet is uncertain in his character and engagements and equally decided in his opinions.

The subject of the opera, as usual where D'Annunzio is concerned, is unpleasant. It was left to his free choice.

It is the well-known Italian story of Ugo and Parisina.

Olympic Swimming Contest.

The announcement that the tryouts for the swimming relay team would probably be held in open water early in June, was not pleasing news to some of the Easterners who were candidates for positions on the Olympic quartet.

They seemed to fear that the cold waters might cause chills, stiffness, or cramps, and so make the test unfair and unsatisfactory. Nor was there any doubt that conditions would be different from those at Stockholm.

The lake in which the international events will be held has a temperature in July of about 68 degrees Fahrenheit, while the waters in the neighborhood of New York seldom show above 60 degrees before the end of June. At the same time, if the deciding races take place indoors, results will be just as unsatisfactory, for the best turners will have an advantage of eight or eleven push-offs, according to the size of the bath, while in Sweden only one turn will be negotiated. It is an unfortunate state of affairs, the committee undoubtedly does the least of two evils in favoring outdoor trials.

Novel Contest in Georgia.

Besides the usual corn contests, duly organized and running full-tilt in Georgia, near Vidalia, there is one of the most novel contests yet recorded in the State.

It is a handicap, and the odds are "long." This contest is between two farmers of the Normantown section, and was brought on when the party of the first part signified his intention of planting twenty acres in corn that was considered "waste."

He had no sooner mentioned putting in this piece than his neighbor offered to make a wager that he could make more corn on two acres of his land than the twenty-acre man could make on his whole plot.

Such odds as these are said to be good if you lose, so the wager was made, and the contest is being watched with much interest by the neighboring farmers. It is not known what methods will be used to reclaim the worn-out twenty acres, but if they prove good, the wager will be paid over, and in addition to this the value of the land will have increased at least tenfold.

Ireland Ready for Home Rule.

Parnell, the great Irish leader in the British Parliament, little dreamed twenty years ago of the rejuvenated, regenerated Ireland that to-day is awaiting the passage of the home rule bill and the organization of the new Irish Parliament in Dublin.

Two decades, says the *Palladium*, of Corning, N. Y., have brought about a social, industrial, economic, and educational change in the Emerald Isle, which, while it makes home rule less imperative, gives assurance that when such grant is given that there is a certainty of successful management.

Those who opposed the measure in 1886 and 1892, on the ground that the Irish were not ready to govern themselves, will have to find a new weapon with which to fight the present measure.

Overcrowding in New York.

Old New York is probably the most overcrowded city in the world.

In the Society of Medical Jurisprudence, in New York, Professor Elgin Gould, a sociological expert, said:

"The greatest evil in New York is overcrowding. There is no city in the world that compares with it in that respect. There are many blocks here 800 by 200 feet in which from 2,500 to 4,800 persons are living. The block in the negro district 5,000 people are living.

"Bombay, next worst in this respect, is more than half behind New York, and London is only a third as badly off."

To Prevent Steel Company from Destroying Documents.

Judges Gray, Buffington, and McPherson, sitting in the United States court, in Philadelphia, heard argument on the petition of the government asking for a permanent injunction to prevent the United States Steel Corporation and its subsidiaries from destroying papers, books, or documents in their possession while the government might need in its suit instituted last October for dissolution.

When argument was concluded, the court held the case under advisement. The court did not announce the name of the examiner who is to take testimony in the suit instituted against the steel corporation for its dissolution.

After the dissolution suit was filed, the government obtained a temporary restraining order to prevent destruction of papers. The government, in its petition, alleged that the American Steel & Wire Co., a subsidiary of the steel corporation, had destroyed documents, letters, et cetera, after a grand jury investigation in New York of the alleged wire pool.

Joseph H. Choate and R. V. Lindabury, of New York, and John G. Johnson, of Philadelphia, appeared for the defendants. The burden of their arguments was that the steel corporation did not object so much to the injunction as it did to the imputation going broadcast that it was a despoiler of documents, and that it had intended to commit an unlawful act.

J. M. Dickinson, former secretary of war, counsel for the government, in arguing for the permanent injunction, said the papers in the possession of the steel corporation were of importance, and were necessary to the government in its prosecution of the dissolution suit.

"It seems we are living in an age of defamation," said Mr. Choate. "There appears to be a carnival of crimination. No man appears to be safe from attack. The mania for crimination has not only reached the public mind, but it has entered the government itself. We appear to be living under a form of government never known before—government by indictment." He referred to the results in the beef and sugar cases.

Pulpit Exaggerations Forbidden.

"The late Bishop Mackay-Smith," said a Philadelphia clergyman, "didn't believe in pulpit exaggerations. He didn't believe, I mean, that a divine had any right to take an old anecdote and tell it as though it were a true episode that had happened to himself.

"He once illustrated what he meant by telling about a minister who was entertaining a guest with an account of a fishing excursion in California, when his little daughter said:

"'Is that true, or are you preaching, papa?'"

Luther Burbank Spins a Yarn.

Luther Burbank, the plant wizard, of California, was talking at a reception in Los Angeles about fool jokes.

"A Los Angeles editor," he said, "played a fool joke on a reporter last year. The reporter had a garden, and the editor came into the local room one spring afternoon and gave him a packet of dried-herring roe.

"'These seed,' said the editor, running the tiny brown eggs through his fingers, 'are the seed of that rare exotic grandiflora belladonna. I received them yesterday from the Persian ambassador. As you have such a fine garden, I thought I'd give them to you.'

"The reporter, thanking the editor gratefully, put the seeds in his vest pocket.

"'I'll plant them,' he said, 'this very day, at once. I wish you'd drop in next week, or thereabouts, and see how they are getting on.'

"Thanks, said the editor. And the next week, happening to be coming in the reporter's neighborhood, he called. The reporter was delighted to see him.

"'I'm truly delighted to see you, sir,' he said. 'The grandiflora belladonna have just come up.'

"He led the editor into the garden.

"'There, aren't they beautiful?' he cried.

"And in a neat semicircle the editor beheld twenty or thirty little red herring heads peeping coyly out of the ground."

Historic Tree Planting in New York.

Before two hundred men, women, and children there was planted in Central Park, New York, a royal English oak tree, to take the place of the one planted fifty-two years ago by the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. of England.

Park Commissioner Stover was master of ceremonies and General James Grant Wilson, who was present when the first English oak was planted, and Henry Clews delivered short addresses.

The ceremonies took place at four-thirty in the afternoon, between the central drive and the Mall, opposite the Sixty-ninth

Street entrance. The tree was planted in the shadow of the white oak tree planted by Washington Irving in 1859. Two other trees were planted the following year, an American elm and the English oak, that since died.

General James Grant Wilson, after the young oak had been placed in the soil, said:

"That tree—the one which died—was to have been a memorial, which we shall shortly celebrate, in December, 1014, of the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty, which has never been broken, between the most powerful countries of the world—England and the United States."

An iron railing will be placed around the tree, and some time in the near future a tablet commemorating the event will be placed upon the trunk.

The "Ty Cobb" of Wellesley.

Miss Edith Sackett is a heroine at Wellesley College, at Wellesley, Mass. Although she did not win a victory for the "Senior Athletics," the star baseball nine of the senior class, she proved such an individual star in the game of baseball that she was crowned the Ty Cobb of the college.

That baseball is one of the accomplishments of Wellesley College girls was demonstrated when the junior "Giants" defeated the senior "Athletics," 15 to 14, in Mary Heminway gymnasium.

Superior work in the 1012 battery nearly won the game. The senior team was captained by Miss Edith Sackett, who pitched.

Miss Anna Christensen caught for the seniors. Only undergraduates and faculty members were admitted to the game. There was no lack of enthusiasm, for many Wellesley fanettes came out to cheer for their favorites.

In Honor of Koch, Fighter of Consumption.

In conection with the thirtieth anniversary of Professor Koch's announcement of his discovery of the tuberculosis bacillus, the German emperor, in Berlin, Germany, ordered the Royal Institute for the Study of Infectious Diseases, in Berlin, in which Professor Koch worked for twenty years, to bear Koch's name hereafter.

The emperor, in his decree, said:

"Professor Koch, by his great discovery, opened the combat against the greatest scourge of mankind, which has since been conducted with unprecedented success, and has made suffering humanity his eternal debtor."

Diplomatic Speech in St. Petersburg.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Sazonoff, in St. Petersburg, in the course of a statement on Russian foreign relations made in the Douma, referred to the abrogation by the United States of the Russo-American treaty of 1832.

The minister said President Taft had made the abrogation in a form acceptable to international intercourse. The assertions that Russia had violated the treaty were not, he said, believed in serious circles in America. If the United States should take steps to negotiate a new treaty, Russia would take into consideration all the wishes of Russian society.

But, conscious of the national honor and in close union with all classes of the Russian people, the government firmly intends, Monsieur Sazonoff added, not to allow an interference with the indisputable sovereign right of Russia to define its internal legislation as exclusively dependent upon its own needs. The government hoped that the time-honored friendly relations would not be darkened by the passing divergency of views and that Russia and the United States would be able to cooperate where their interests coincided.

"A Captain Unafraid."

"A Captain Unafraid," the strange adventures of Dynamite Johnny O'Brien, as set down by Horace Smith, published by Harper & Bro., New York, is a new book worth reading.

The author of this work has given the public heretofore a graphic and sensational book, "The War Maker," in which the great activities of a world adventurer were set forth.

This present book is somewhat of the same order, but on a narrower scale.

In this, an irresponsible adventurer has his activities well portrayed, the incidents relating chiefly to events in the West Indies and of countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico.

The author is a seasoned writer in this field, and he makes his narratives as near like plain history as is possible to do.

All is presented in a most dramatic style, with the use of racy language and of the advantage of a thorough knowledge of historical events of local conditions in the different countries where the adventures are laid. It is interesting work, well done.

Duel at the Red Mill.

A duel at the Moulin Rouge, a famous dance hall in Paris, France, is a novelty. There was a time when the gardens now occupied by the famous ballrooms were used for dueling, but that was more than a generation ago.

To-day it seems absurd to think of a duel at the Vermilion Mill, where one is accustomed to see only boisterous dances.

The scene was particularly solemn when a grave encounter took place in the grounds, which are lit up at night by Chinese lanterns, and deserted in the broad daylight.

Monsieur Rouzier-Dorcieres, a famous duelist, had a dispute of four years' standing with Lauriac Armory, and the only way to settle it was with blood.

The seconds of the former were Willy De Bleet and Gomez Carillo, and for the latter Monsieurs De Mirecourt and Chavance. Monsieur Blest Gana directed the combat, and, after a few sharp attacks, Monsieur Rouzier-Dorcieres cut the biceps of his adversary.

Blood flowed in the Vermilion Mill, honor was safe, and the two adversaries separated, reconciled, leaving the place free for hosts of merry dancers.

Students Will Sue College.

Facing the loss of a year's study following the failure of the board of regents to reorganize the medical department of West Virginia University, at Morgantown, W. Va., medical students threatened to sue the university for expenses and time consumed during the year.

The trouble grew out of the fact that the Association of American Medical Colleges does not recognize the medical department of the university. To obtain recognition the department must be organized separately, with a dean and a separate faculty.

West Virginia University formerly was a member of the association, but some time ago the membership was lost when the medical department became part of the college of arts and sciences.

The difficulty dates back prior to the opening of the school last fall, when the students were advised to return to the university and assured that a reorganization would be affected and recognition secured.

No action has been taken, and recently the students got together and notified the regents that unless something was done, suit would be brought.

Free Buns for Strikers' Children.

Pathetic scenes were witnessed at a distribution of hot buns to the children of striking miners at the skating rink, in Merton Road, in London, England.

More than three thousand children were waiting for admission when the doors opened. A large number had been there since six o'clock in the morning. Some of them were on crutches, and hundreds were without boots. All were in rags.

Ten children thumped all the way from Battersea, a distance of five miles, to share in the distribution.

Ten thousand buns were given away, altogether. Each child received three, and the remainder were distributed among parents of the children, a considerable number of whom were present.

Measure to Safeguard Ocean Travel.

The United States Senate committee on foreign relations, in Washington, agreed to recommend to the Senate the adoption of the amended Martine resolution looking to international cooperation in the regulation of ocean traffic. It advised the president that the Senate would favor treaties with the maritime powers regulating speed, routes, and life-saving and wireless equipment. Searchlights were especially recommended.

No Need for "Titanics."

Ocean-going vessels are being built too large, in the opinion of Cortland D. Cramp, the Philadelphia shipbuilder. In discussing the *Titanic* disaster, he pointed out that ocean liners are not built in the same manner as naval vessels.

"The *Titanic*," he says, "was too long, and there is no need to build such big ships. It would have taken a mile for her to turn around. Naval vessels have coal bunkers are ranged along the ship's side, to give strength on resisting shock. The *Titanic* had hers in the center. The former plan is preferable."

Smallest Wireless Apparatus.

Probably the smallest wireless telegraph set ever made has just been perfected by the officers in the Army Signal Corps Laboratory, in Washington, D. C., and has been sent to New York for display in an aeronautical show. The receiving and transmitting apparatus weighs only 2½ pounds, and is confined with a box 15 inches square and 10 inches deep. The generator from which the apparatus derives its power adds an additional 26 pounds.

The machine is the result of the efforts of the army signal officers, under the direction of Major Charles McK. Saltzman, to perfect the lightest machine possible for use in the "fifth military arm," or the aeronautical division.

This particular set will be installed on

The Nick Carter Weekly

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We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

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